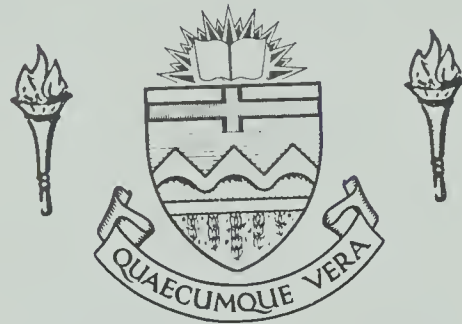


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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
GREAT BRITAIN AND THE
EVER VICTORIOUS ARMY, 1860-1864

by



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled GREAT BRITAIN AND THE EVER VICTORIOUS ARMY, 1860-1864 submitted by ROBIN C.D. McLACHLAN in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of ARTS.

ABSTRACT

The Ever Victorious Army (1860-1864) was a foreign officered force of Chinese soldiers, trained along western lines, which participated in the last years of the campaign to suppress the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864). It is not the intention of this study to present a comprehensive account of the force, but to concentrate upon some important, but generally neglected, facets of it. Specifically, attention is directed to the involvement of Great Britain in the Ever Victorious Army and to the attitudes of the British diplomatic and military personnel, such as Bruce and Gordon. Included in the study is an examination of general British involvement in Chinese military affairs, and of particular British training projects of the early 1860's, which were designed to strengthen the Chinese armed forces. The links between these training projects and the Ever Victorious Army are traced. Further, an attempt is made to view the Ever Victorious Army within the context of general Anglo-Chinese relations, and within the context of regionalism inside China. The whole study is contained within the framework of a general chronological account of the development and activities of the Ever Victorious Army from its inception to its disbandment.

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Robin C.D. McLachlan

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INTRODUCTION

The nineteenth century German historian, Leopold Von Ranke, described China as belonging to the "nations of eternal stagnation."¹ This was a common attitude of the nineteenth century, and even of the twentieth century up to the last two decades. The Ch'ing government and its attendant divisions of bureaucracy were freely charged by the west as being completely incompetent, inefficient and corrupt. Westerners viewed China with an arrogant and superior attitude. But by the Convention of Peking (1860), as western involvement in China became further and seemingly permanently entrenched, this attitude took on a note of increasing intolerance and impatience. The backwardness of China and her institutions became a constant hindrance, if not a threat, to the advance of western interests. It was this attitude that encouraged the permeation by westerners and their methods into many aspects of Chinese government and institutions. The Chinese Postal System and the Chinese Maritime Customs Service are two classic examples of such involvement by the west.²

One other institution singled out very early as being fraught with dangerous incompetence was the Chinese military establishment. By the early 1860's it was realized that the Chinese army could not be relied upon to provide a peaceful environment wherein foreign commercial interests would flourish. This took on added realism as the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) continued to defy the attempts of the Ch'ing armies to suppress it. Further, foreign interests at Shanghai were continually under the threatening shadow of the Taiping armies.

The lack of confidence in the Chinese military establishment first manifested itself in the establishment of a foreign mercenary force in 1860 by an enterprising American, Frederick Ward. Displaying Yankee ingenuity, Ward made use of the Chinese incompetence in the

¹As cited in Wolfgang Franke, China and the West, trans. by R.A. Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 142.

²See "The Chinese Maritime Customs Service," and, "Chinese Post Office," Encyclopedia Sinica (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1917; reprinted by Taipei: Literature House, Ltd., 1964), 327-333 and 451-456.

defense of the Shanghai region as a money making proposition. Within a year more by accident than by design, Ward was using Chinese soldiers as the mainstay of his force. They were trained in a western fashion, used western arms and served under western officers, making them the first example of a Chinese force organized according to western ideas.

The British developed their own scheme for the wholesale reorganization of the Chinese armed forces. Initiated in the first months of 1862, it was on a more grandiose scale than Ward's force. After Ward's death in September of 1862, his force, now known as the Ever Victorious Army, gradually came under joint British-Chinese control. It remained in existence under its British commander, Charles George Gordon, until the spring of 1864.

The Ever Victorious Army was the main endeavour of British involvement in Chinese military affairs in the early 1860's. This involvement represented both the British attempt to reorganize the Chinese armed forces along western lines and direct participation in Chinese military action against the Taipings.

Since the time of the Ever Victorious Army there have been numerous incidents of western participation in the affairs of subsequent Chinese military establishments. This has been in varying degrees of intensity, from the sales of European arms dealers, like Krupp of Germany, to the wholesale military assistance of the United States to the armies of Chiang Kai-shek for the last three decades. But the success of moulding a Chinese army in the image of its western counterpart is open to question. The cumulation of foreign military assistance in China since the Ever Victorious Army can be traced to those armies represented by Chiang Kai-shek. Despite this long history of western assistance, it is ironic to note that the most successful Chinese army, successful by virtue of its victories over the armies of Chiang Kai-shek and the fear in which it is regarded by the west, is the People's Liberation Army of the People's Republic of China. The People's Liberation Army developed in a purely Chinese context and was based on Chinese needs, traditions and ideas. It serves to illustrate the fallaciousness of the west's faith in the universality of application of their own institutions outside of the western context.

CHAPTER I

THE ARMED FORCES OF CHINA IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the estimation of westerners, the Chinese were not a people exhibiting prowess in the martial arts. This had been expressed as early as the 1520's by two Portuguese observers, Cristavaõ Vieira and Vasco Calvo, who readily noted the inferiority of Chinese weapons and armour and expressed little admiration for Chinese soldiers and their courage.¹ Over three hundred years later, the gap in military matters between the west and China was even greater. Despite China's enormous size and her huge population, the British victories in the two Anglo-Chinese Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860) were quite easily attained and gave ample proof to western observers that China was still quite incompetent in military matters. Such an opinion was quite accurate when applied to the regular Chinese and Manchu armies of the mid-nineteenth century.

The official and regular armed forces of China consisted of two separate groups - the Banner Army and the Green Standard Army or lü-ying.²

¹Donald F. Lach, China in the Eyes of Europe: The Sixteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 736-737.

²The information presented here on the nature and condition of these two forces is based largely on a report written in 1851 by Thomas Wade, then a British consular official. See Thomas Wade, "The Army of the Chinese Empire," Chinese Repository (Hereinafter referred to as CR.), XX:5 (May, 1851), 250-280; XX:6 (June, 1851), 300-340; and, XX:7 (July, 1851), 363-422. Excerpts of Wade's report can be found in Captain Gill, R.E., China - Military Report of the Province of Chihli (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1879), pp. 115-128. Another primary report worthy of mention but not of the period under discussion is "Military Skill and Power of the Chinese," CR, V:4 (August, 1836), 165-178 by an unknown author. It is similar in descriptions and conclusions to Wade's article.

Good secondary accounts are Hosea Ballou Morse, The International Relations of the Chinese Empire (Hereinafter referred to as International Relations.), Vol. I: The Period of Conflict, 1834-1860 (London: Longman's, 1918), pp. 21-23; Ralph L. Powell, The Rise of Chinese Military Power, 1895-1912 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 7-23; and, William James Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan and the Taiping Rebellion (Hereinafter referred to as Tsêng Kuo-fan.) (2nd. ed.; New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1964), pp. 1-16. Much of the information in these secondary accounts is derived from Wade's report.

The Banner Army was composed of Manchus, Mongol Tartars and Han Kiun (Chinese descended from those who forsook the Ming and sided with the invaders).³ Membership of these nations in the army was hereditary, with the Manchus forming the largest group. The army was divided under eight banners into a total of twenty-four divisions, as a complete division of each nationality existed under each banner. In Manchuria, the Banner Army originally had been an organization of the entire population for military purposes. When the Manchus moved into China in the seventeenth century, the Banner Army became the inner core of the garrison forces, being stationed in and around Peking, Manchuria and a few key points in the provinces.⁴ Around Peking, in the province of Chihli, the Banner Army formed a cordon with garrison colonies in twenty-five cities with the specific task of protecting Peking and the emperor. The task of the provincial garrisons was to ensure the occupation of China, to act as an outer defense for Peking and to act as a line of defense against incursions from Mongolia.

Thomas Wade estimated the size of the Banner Army to be about 300,000 officers, cadets and men, with 130,000 of these stationed in Peking and its immediate neighbourhood.⁵ The twenty-five garrison cities of Chihli and the garrisons in Manchuria accounted for most of the remaining troops. The emphasis in the distribution of these troops was definitely on the north-eastern region of the empire. It serves to illustrate the continual insecurity of the Manchus in China.

The Banner Army, despite its enormous size as a standing army, had grown quite ineffective as a military force by the 1850's.⁶ It

³Wade, "The Army of the Chinese Empire," CR, XX:5, 252

⁴Morse, International Relations, I, 21-22.

⁵Wade, "The Army of the Chinese Empire," CR, XX:5, 254 and, XX:7, 420. These figures are based on data gathered in 1825.

⁶Franz Michael, "Regionalism in Nineteenth-Century China," written as the introduction to Stanley Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), xxxii-xxxv.

suffered from an almost complete lack of worthwhile military training and activity.⁷ Furthermore, there was no escape for the bannermen from this debilitating inactivity. They were prohibited from leaving their units to take up other vocations and their salaries, which were fixed to seventeenth century levels, were quite low. Consequently, the force degenerated from an army of hardy warriors into a force quite effete and sunken in morale.

The organizational and administrative arrangements of the Banner Army also contributed to its weakness. Each banner was broken up and scattered among the various garrisons so that no territorial units were created. During campaign, commanders were appointed for the occasion and each force was composed of small units from different banners. In garrison and in the field each banner was served by its respective banner administration. The purpose of these and additional arrangements was to prevent a military commander from assuming too much control over a force and to ensure imperial control. But such bureaucratic controls also served to make the army less effective as a military machine and to hinder the unity of the force.

The Canadian born historian of nineteenth-century China, Hosea Ballou Morse, wrote that although the Banner Army was supposed to be the principal force in maintaining the integrity of the empire against foreign aggression and internal rebellion, it was completely ineffective by the 1840's.

. . .during the first [Anglo-Chinese] war, ending with the peace of Nanking, 1842, it was these troops who stood the first brunt of battle, and who suffered far heavier loss than the Chinese auxiliaries. From that time they disappear as a fighting force, and are only heard of as being ferreted from their hiding places by the Taiping rebels and massacred.⁸

One point in favour of the Banner Army was its loyalty to the Ch'ing dynasty. Considering their isolation from the rest of

⁷Wade, "The Army of the Chinese Empire," CR, XX:7, 417.

⁸Morse, International Relations, I, 23.

society and their racial and historical background, this strong loyalty of the Banner soldiers is not unusual. Franz Michael, a modern writer, describes it as:

. . . the loyalty of a group that had no way out. And indeed from the period of the Taiping Rebellion down to the Chinese Revolution of 1911, the Manchu garrisons though no longer a serious military factor, remained loyal. Whole garrisons were wiped out, and, as the reports put it "died loyally."⁹

From the beginning of Ch'ing rule it was realized that the Banner Army was not of sufficient size to garrison all of China. To aid them the lü-ying or Green Standard Army, a Chinese professional army quite separate from the Banner Army, was formed. The lü-ying was scattered throughout the empire in numerous small cantonments, none of size enough to outstrengthen neighbouring Banner Army garrisons. The total numerical strength of the force was estimated by Wade at about 620,000 men and officers, distributed among 1,202 cantonments.¹⁰

Whereas the main task of the Banner Army was that of defense against external aggression and internal rebellion, the lü-ying was assigned a variety of tasks causing it to be described as an immense constabulary rather than as a fighting army. Wade described its functions as follows:

In the provinces there are . . . detachments employed to keep in check the border savages, and the aborigines in the centre of China; and the navy, as far as the issue of orders is of avail, is in constant motion both along the coasts and up the rivers, for the protection of commerce; but by far the greater portion of the Luhying land force seems to be devoted to the duty of detecting or preventing robbery, contrabandism, and other crimes; of escorting stores, bullion to the mint, or criminals from one jurisdiction to another. The collection of the revenue and the postal establishment are beholden to it, and the high officers charged with the supervision of the river embankments in the east and centre of China, and the transmission of grain from the centre and south to the capital, sending large bodies of workmen and other half civil employés, a certain force of Luhying at

⁹Michael, "Regionalism in Nineteenth-Century China," introduction to Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, xxxiv.

¹⁰Wade, "The Army of the Chinese Empire," CR, XX:5, 253-255. These figures are based on 1825 pay records.

their disposal.¹¹

In a manner similar to the Banner Army, the lǔ-ying suffered from an organizational structure that prevented efficiency or unity and created an unclear chain of command.¹² But it was wholesale corruption and its attendant backsliding that rendered the lǔ-ying totally ineffective as an army. The corruption was in existence throughout the entire army, from the officers to the privates. H.B. Morse, in describing the situation, wrote:

The official hierarchy of this army exists solely for the purpose of personal profit and self-maintenance, the last thing they desire being to lead their brave followers into action, even against an unarmed mob; while the rank and file exist mainly on paper, but partly in the shape of gaudy uniforms to be filled, for inspection purposes, by temporary recruits enlisted for the day.¹³

Wade's report in the Chinese Repository contains quite detailed information on this disorderly state of the lǔ-ying. He wrote:

In reply to the young Emperor's [Hsien Fêng] requisition for counsel and information, promulgated a month after his accession to the throne (1850), some eighty memorials were presented.

. . . Hwang Chau-lin, censor for Kiangnan, complains that the ranks [of the lǔ-ying] are not kept full, names are returned, and the pay of nonexistent soldiers; drill is utterly neglected. Those who are in the ranks are employed in menial service by their officers, who filch their pay, and produce discontent and complaint on the part of the soldier, who is in constant collusion with robbers.

Chang Sih-kang, an expectant, . . . [notes that] . . . officers falsify the returns, overdraw their accounts, and make deductions from the soldiers' pay, which is already too small to tempt any respectable man to enlist. The ranks are half empty, half filled with vagabonds, of whom the weaker are incompetent, and the stronger in league with smugglers and robbers. Men whose names are on the

¹¹Ibid., XX:7, 364

¹²Michael, "Regionalism in Nineteenth-Century China," introduction to Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, xxxii-xxxv; and Franz Michael, "Military Organization and Power Structure of China during the Taiping Rebellion," Pacific Historical Review (Hereinafter referred to as PHR.) XVIII (1949), 471-472.

¹³Morse, International Relations, I, 23.

roll send any fellow, who has not the sense to earn his bread, as a substitute; such desert before an enemy or never want to come in front of one, and there is no clue to discovering them, as their names have never been returned.

Such papers are not unnoticed by the head of the Government, but the receipt in acknowledgement of them are mere pro formâ fulminations. His Majesty is indignant and astonished that things should be; they could not be if the higher authorities did their duty.¹⁴

According to Wade, the armaments of both the lû-ying and the Banner Army were very much antiquated and obsolete at the time of the Taiping Rebellion. The Imperial Body Guard of the Banner Army, an elite force charged with guarding the person and apartments of the Emperor, were armed with bows and arrows. There is no knowledge of their using muskets or other firearms.¹⁵ Proficiency in archery was the guarantee of promotion within this force. The leading division of the Banner Army had some of its troops trained with the matchlock, but the bow and arrow was still the main weapon. A heavy reliance on traditional weapons was the case throughout the Banner Army and the lû-ying. Where firearms were used, they were usually cumbersome matchlocks and jingals.¹⁶ Artillery, also, tended to be antiquated and of poor quality. The Chinese arsenal included artillery pieces with barrels formed from wood held together by iron hoops. Guns in fortifications were fixed in position, unable to elevate, depress or traverse quickly. Military tactics, too, tended to be antiquated with a heavy reliance on the tactics and strategems of such ancient military authorities as Sun Tzu.¹⁷

¹⁴Wade, "The Army of the Chinese Empire," CR, XX:7, 420-422.

¹⁵Ibid., XX:5, 259-264.

¹⁶A jingal is ". . . a swivel or a large musket. It is the Chinese blunderbuss, about twenty pounds in weight. It is fired from a fixed swivel or with the barrel resting on a man's shoulders." From "Jingal," Encyclopedia Sinica (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1917; reprinted by Taipei: Literature House, Ltd., 1964), 262.

¹⁷Sun Tzu, Sun Tzu on the Art of War, trans. with introduction and notes by Lionel Giles (Shanghai, 1910; reprinted by Taipei: Literature House, Ltd., 1964).

When put into practice, the drill and training of the two armies was as antiquated and useless as their weapons and tactics. The troops were given little practical knowledge and experience that would be of use in actual warfare. In his report, Wade describes in some detail the drill of the "light division" of the Banner Army. This was a force meant to meet sudden emergencies with swift and decisive action. They drilled as follows:

. . . six times a month with the scaling ladder, when they also fire three vollies with the matchlock; six times they wrestle and perform feats of horsemanship, one rider leaping on the back of another's horse, met at a gallop, while the rider of the latter similarly exchanges his seat at the same moment. Whilst mounted, they likewise fire three rounds with the matchlock, shoot three flights of arrows, and attack and defend with the sword and iron whip or flail. . . . They have besides six trials, monthly, in horse and foot archery; and twice a year, for twelve days at a time, practice at a mark with the matchlock; each marksman takes five shots each day, and is rewarded or punished according as his varied success places him in one of the three classes of proficiency.¹⁸

There is no indication that the division carried on military manoeuvres, beyond parades.

In summation, the state of the Chinese armed forces at the time of the Taiping Rebellion was one of gross incompetence, corruption and obsolescence. The military establishment displayed no use or knowledge of western military methods or materials. The ease with which the Taiping armies forced back the regular army showed that the government's confidence in these immense bodies of poorly trained, poorly armed, and poorly led horse and foot was most ungrounded.

The Chinese military establishment had an inability to reform or improve itself. The army in the mid-nineteenth century was virtually the same in terms of equipment, techniques and organization as it had been at its inception at the beginning of the Ch'ing dynasty. Its inability to reform stemmed largely from the almost universal disinterest in military matters. This disinterest in the state of the army is the result of the traditional Chinese or Confucian approach to things

¹⁸Wade, "The Army of the Chinese Empire," CR, XX:5, 275.

military. The army was viewed as a necessary but distasteful organization only to be used in the settling of problems as a last resort. The scholarly and peaceful approach to problems was preferred to an immediate resort to arms. The soldier ranked low in society and the army was not considered as an institution of immediate importance. In the same manner, the army was not considered a suitable career for any but the most worthless of individuals. As a popular proverb stated: "Good iron is not beaten into nails; good men are not made into soldiers." This accounts for the worthless officer corps of the imperial armed forces. However, even if the officer corps contained individuals seriously interested in reforming or modernizing the army, it was extremely difficult for their ideas to receive widespread currency. Besides having Confucian doctrine against them, the organization of the military establishment did not create any clear channels for the movement of ideas or their establishment as practice.¹⁹ The army was organized in a manner to prevent the usurpation of its control by any element hostile to the throne. The result was overlapping commands, extreme balkanization of military units and the tendency of Peking to play commanders against one another.

Despite the government's lack of interest, vast improvements did occur in China's military capabilities. The improvements occurred outside of the official military organization and initially on a somewhat spontaneous, unofficial and local level through the organization of local defense units, the t'uan lien, against bandit bands.²⁰ These home guard units, usually of no more than a few hundred men and armed with traditional weapons, were organized by the local gentry, officials or chapters of secret societies, often without the permission or immediate knowledge of the provincial or central governments. The t'uan lien was not intended to replace the regular army but only to act as a temporary and a necessary supplement. But the t'uan lien did

¹⁹Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan, pp. 8-11.

²⁰Philip Kuhn, "The T'uan-Lien Local Defense System at the Time of the Taiping Rebellion," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, XXVII (1967), 218-255.

not always support and cooperate with the government and its officials. They were, first and foremost, military forces established for regional purposes and supported by regional funds. They were not organized to act only as instruments of the government. There are numerous instances of the local gentry leading these forces against local government officials over such problems as taxation. The central government for its part was suspicious and fearful of regional gentry power and distrustful of regional military forces.

With the commencement and rapid spread of the Taiping Rebellion the regular armed forces were proven ineffective. The local defense forces, especially those organized by Chiang Chung-yüan and Lo Tsê-nan, displayed far more ability in defending the towns and cities in the path of the Taipings.²¹ The central government was forced to recognize the weakness of its standing armies and found itself compelled to rely upon the local defense corps under local gentry leadership to stem the advance of the rebellion.

In 1852, an imperial edict was issued to the high officials of Hunan and Hupeh to encourage the development of these local defense groups.²² In January of 1853, under orders from the emperor, Tsêng Kuo-fan, a gentry scholar from Hunan, assumed the task of recruiting, drilling and organizing the Hunan militia.²³ He formed the Hunan Army,²⁴ composed largely of Hunanese local defense groups, including those of Chiang Chung-yüan and Lo Tsê-nan. The force was completely separate from the Banner Army or the lǔ-ying.

It would be a misnomer to call Tsêng's force a modernized or westernized army, but it was definitely of a reformed and improved

²¹Têng Ssu-yü, "Chiang Chung-yüan," and "Lo Tsê-nan," in Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1911) (Hereinafter referred to as Eminent Chinese), ed. by Arthur W. Hummel (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), I, 136-137 and 540-541.

²²Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, p. 7.

²³Têng Ssu-yü, "Tsêng Kuo-fan," in Eminent Chinese, II, 751.

²⁴The Hunan Army is also known as the "Hunan Braves" and the Hsiang-chün (Army of Hsiang). Hsiang was Tsêng's home area in Hunan.

nature. The significance of Tsêng's new army is that he used entirely new approaches to the task of organizing and maintaining it.²⁵ He formed his army out of the local defense units in the province but he consistently kept these units intact with their original commanders so as to create an esprit de corps. He cultivated the loyalty of the officers and men to his person and pressed this idea of personal loyalty in the relations between his officers and their men. New officers were largely selected from the local gentry, not from lŭ-ying or Banner Army sources. When troops were recruited they were hardy and trustworthy peasant volunteers of far better quality than the type of recruit in the regular army. And, they were trained and, if possible, given field experience against bandits before being sent in against the Taipings. Tsêng's soldiers were paid well, and with some regularity. Their pay was four times that of the official regular army. Financing the army had presented some initial problems for Tsêng. He realized that to rely on the central government for money would place serious restrictions on the independence of himself and his army. He supported the army through regional subscriptions and a likin tax (tax on merchandise in transit) levied by his own agents. Taxation was technically the monopoly of the government, but in the confusion of the moment Tsêng was able to impose this tax which had not been used previously by the government.

Tsêng created a Chinese army of only a few thousand men, but in terms of training, discipline, leadership, morale and ability they were far superior to the massive regular forces. But more important, Tsêng created an army that was virtually independent in terms of command and finance from Peking and the official military establishment. It should not be construed that Tsêng and his army were disloyal to Peking, but the army was basically regional in terms of support and leadership. Peking was aware of the danger of regional military forces. It attempted to counteract its effect by immediately sending out

²⁵Michael, "Military Organization and Power Structure of China during the Taiping Rebellion," PHR, XVIII (1949), 478-479; and, Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, pp. 13-15.

special high commissioners to set up other local forces directly under central control, but these soon became as useless and corrupt as the regular army. The Taiping Rebellion prevented the ordering the disbandment of, or serious tampering with, the Hunan Army.

The success of Tsêng's techniques led to their imitation by other gentry officials, often under Tsêng's direction. The Ch'u-chün formed in 1860 by Tso Tsung-t'ang and the Huai-chün formed in 1862 by Li Hung-chang are the two most important examples of such armies.

The situation that existed by 1860 was one of two military systems. One was official and controlled from the centre but extremely inept. The other was regionally controlled and, although by no means comparable to European armies of the time, it was superior to the regular forces.

CHAPTER II

THE EVER VICTORIOUS ARMY AND BRITISH POLICY IN CHINA, 1860 - MID 1862

The purpose of this chapter is to trace chronologically the early development of the Ever Victorious Army and of British interest in that force and in Chinese military affairs in general.¹ It will be shown how the Ever Victorious Army developed from a small band of foreign mercenaries into an army of Chinese soldiers trained in a western manner and led by foreign officers. Initially, the British attitude towards the force was quite negative. But by early 1862, the force was viewed with favour and its success encouraged the formation of British sponsored programmes of modernization for the Chinese armed forces. The motives for and development of these programmes shall be examined.

The Origin and Early Development of the Ever Victorious Army

In 1860, the Taipings suddenly broke through the surrounding imperialist forces and rapidly moved east into the Soochow-Shanghai area of Kiangsu. This area, rich in trade and revenues, lost numerous cities, including Soochow, to the rebels. The regular forces stationed there, for Kiangsu was not defended by regional forces of the Hsiang-chün type, were totally incapable of forcing the rebels out of the province or of guaranteeing the security of Shanghai from rebel attack. The defense of Shanghai became dependent upon the British and French, then at war with China. The city of Shanghai, one of the few Kiangsu cities not overrun by the rebels, was filled with refugee merchants, gentry and officials. They, in conjunction with their local counterparts, formed the United Defense Bureau in 1860.² Part

¹References to Chinese military affairs in this thesis are made primarily with regard to the land forces of China (cavalry, infantry and artillery) as outlined in the previous chapter. It is not the intention of this thesis to discuss the concurrent attempts to modernize China's naval force or the participation of the Royal Navy in the suppression of the Taipings, except as it applies to the subject of this thesis. For information on naval reform see John L. Rawlinson, China's Struggle for Naval Development, 1839-1895 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

²Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, p. 33.

of the action taken by this committee was the formation of a European style force under an American freebooter, Frederick Townsend Ward.³

Through a Captain Gough, who commanded the gunboat Confucius in the service of the United Defense Bureau, Ward obtained an interview in the spring of 1860 with Taki, a member of the bureau.⁴ Taki was also a circuit intendant (taotai) for Shanghai and a prominent merchant and banker. According to Ward's biographer, Robert S. Rantoul:

Ward, in his straight-forward manner, laid before Taki this offer: he would, for a large, stipulated price in hand, capture Sung Kiang, the capital city of the Shanghai district and a great Rebel stronghold not many miles up the river. Once in possession of Sung Kiang, he would establish there headquarters for operations⁵ by land and water, as a diversion for the relief of Shanghai.

Edward Forester, who was involved with Ward in this project,

³Biographical information on Ward is often contradictory and of doubtful accuracy. He is said to have had a well established background of mercenary activities in Mexico, Nicaragua with Walker, South America with Garibaldi and the Crimea with the French. He was originally from Salem, Massachusetts and of an old and well-established merchant and sailing family. Ward had spent some time at sea and had worked on coastal steamers in China, as a mate on a Yangtze steamer and, just previous to his mercenary activities around Shanghai, as an officer on the Chinese armed steamer, Confucius. The Confucius was one of a considerable fleet of larger and smaller craft in the employ of the United Defense Bureau. For further information on Ward see: "Frederick Ward," Encyclopedia Sinica, 593; Morse, The International Relations of the Chinese Empire, Vol. II; The Period of Submission, 1861-1893, pp. 69-70; Holger Cahill, A Yankee Adventurer (New York: The Macaulay Company, 1930); Robert S. Rantoul, "Frederick Townsend Ward," Historical Collections of the Essex Institute (Hereinafter HCEI), XLIV: 1 (January, 1908), 1-64 and, "Frederick Townsend Ward - Addenda," HCEI, XLIV:4 (October, 1908), 360-370; and, A.A. Hayes, "An American Soldier in China," Atlantic Monthly, LVII:340 (February, 1886), 193-199.

⁴Taki, or Takee as it is sometimes spelt, is the name usually found in older sources. Taki actually refers to the business firm that he headed. His real name would appear to have been Yang Fang (according to Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, p. 30), or Yang Tse-tang (according to Morse, International Relations, Vol. II, footnote 22, p. 70). There is no reference to Taki under any of these names in Hummel, ed., Eminent Chinese.

⁵Rantoul, "Frederick Townsend Ward," HCEI, XLIV:1, 30.

described Taki's position on such a proposal:

Going over to Shang-Haī, I found Ward in negotiation with a banker, Ta Kee, who had acquired great wealth and now aspired to aid his emperor and achieve honors for himself, through the instrumentation of a foreign military organization. Familiar with English and American methods, and the superiority of foreign arms, Ta Kee believed that a well-drilled and well-equipped force would make rapid inroads against the organization of the rebels; and an acquaintance with Ward justified him in the belief that in the American, such a force would find a skilful and intrepid leader.⁶

Consequently, Ward was commissioned by the bureau through Taki to recapture Sung-chiang for 30,000 taels, payment conditional on success.⁷

Ward led a force of foreigners, mostly deserted and marooned sailors recruited with promises of loot and easy money, in two attempts on Sung-chiang. The second attempt on July 17, 1860, with a force composed mainly of Filipino sailors, was successful.⁸ Early in August, Ward's force, now increased to a semi-permanent army of over two hundred Filipinos, plus an unknown number of Europeans, with an artillery of two six-pounder guns, attempted to capture the city of Ch'ing-p'u in the same prefecture as Sung-chiang.⁹ The attempt to capture Ch'ing-p'u was made twice, both times without success. Interestingly, the Taipings at Ch'ing-p'u also made use of foreign mercenaries, led by an Englishman named Savage.¹⁰ In general, most of the mercenaries were not particular about which side they served.

The attacks on Sung-chiang and Ch'ing-p'u were not made by Ward's force on their own. For example, the August 2 attack on

⁶ Edward Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion," Cosmopolitan Magazine (Hereinafter referred to as CM), XXI:6 (October, 1896), 626.

⁷ Morse, International Relations, II, 70.

⁸ Ibid., II, 70.

⁹ Andrew Wilson, The Ever-Victorious Army - A History of the Chinese Campaign under Lt. Col. C.G. Gordon, C.B.R.E. and of the Suppression of the Taiping Rebellion (Hereinafter referred to as The Ever-Victorious Army.) (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1868), p. 64.

¹⁰ Morse, International Relations, II, 70.

Ch'ing-p'u was done in concert with 10,000 Chinese troops and 200 small Chinese gunboats under General Li Adong (Li Hêng-sung).¹¹ The task of Ward's force was to act as shock troops - to lead the assault or to concentrate on taking a specific gate or breach.¹²

Despite the defeat at Ch'ing-p'u, the capture of Sung-chiang and the continuing inadequacies of Governor Hsüeh Huan's forces were sufficient to give the United Defense Bureau the confidence to continue their financial backing of Ward's force. Through the bureau's representative, Taki, Ward received fairly regular funds sufficient to pay the force and provide it with weapons including some artillery. According to the North China Herald, a Shanghai newspaper, Ward's own pay was 350 taels (f120) per month and that of a private was 30 taels, (f10).¹³ For each city captured there was still the predetermined bonus for Ward and the prospect of loot for all. It was an army of mercenaries and nothing more.

Following the action of August 1860 against the rebels at Ch'ing-p'u, Ward's force remained in garrison at Sung-chiang for over a year keeping the city and its immediate area free of rebels.¹⁴ The force had no further conquests or major actions to its credit until early in 1862. Despite its inactivity the force continued to be supported by the United Defense Bureau in Shanghai.

To the British and Americans in China, Ward and his little army represented only nuisance and trouble. This attitude was not confined to the official level but was present throughout the "respectable" foreign community. The North China Herald on August 4, 1860 in reporting one of the attempts on Ch'ing-p'u by the force

¹¹Wilson, The Ever-Victorious Army, p. 64.

¹²For example, Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion," CM, XXI:6, 626 described the task of the force in the first attempt on Sung-chiang:

"Our plan of operations involved the capture of one of the principal gates of Sung-Kiang. The army of Li Adong was to follow, in reserve, and stand ready to make a fight in the city should the gate fall."

¹³North China Herald, (Hereinafter referred to as NCH.), XI:523 (August 4, 1860), p. 122.

¹⁴Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion," CM, XXI:6, 629.



noted:

The first and best item . . . is the utter defeat of Ward and his men before Tsingpoo. This notorious man has been brought down to Shanghai, not, as was hoped, dead, but severely wounded with a shot in the mouth, one in his side and one in his legs. . . . He managed to drag his carcass out of danger, but several of his valorous blacks [referring to his Filipino soldiers] were killed or wounded It seems astonishing that Ward should be allowed to remain unpunished, and yet not a hint is given that any measures shall be taken against him.¹⁵

Ward's activities were objectionable on several grounds. In the eyes of the American authorities he was breaking the neutrality of the United States in the civil war by participating with his force. British military authorities, especially Admiral Sir James Hope, British naval commander in China, disliked having their men desert to join Ward in hopes of easy plunder and wealth. The desertion was not confined to the military but extended to merchant shipping at Shanghai.

Edward Forester, describing the desertion problem, wrote:

. . . as we had on our rolls not a few who had been induced by the high pay and chance of excitement, to escape from the English men-of-war in the Yang-tse-Kiang, it was impossible for us to send our wounded back to Shang-Hai. Upon several occasions the British admiral [Hope] sent out expeditions of marines to capture British subjects. The viceroy of that time [Hsüeh Huan] was much under British and French domination, and consented at their dictation, to the abolition of our force. But action was delayed, and, when a battalion of marines would be sent against us, we received from the viceroy such information as enabled us to move, in time to escape a conflict.¹⁶

One such British expedition in May of 1861 managed to capture near Sung-chiang thirteen of Ward's men, but none of them were British deserters. According to one of those captured, a John Hinton, Ward had twenty-nine deserted British seamen plus a number of deserted

¹⁵NCH, XI:523 (August 4, 1860), p. 122.

¹⁶Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion", CM, XXI:6, 628.

merchant men.¹⁷

Attempts to stop Ward in his filibustering activities through arrest and confinement proved unsuccessful. In May of 1861, when arrested by the British military authorities on charges of ". . . recruiting Englishmen for service in the Imperial Army" and brought before the American consul at Shanghai, Ward claimed Chinese nationality and was acquitted.¹⁸ H.B. Morse felt that the evidence of nationality must have been falsified as it was not until March of 1862 that an imperial decree conferred Chinese nationality on Ward.¹⁹ Hope then attempted to hold Ward prisoner on board a British warship at Shanghai and thus end his filibustering activities.²⁰ However, Ward managed to escape and to elude further capture.

The problem of enlistment of foreign soldiers and sailors by Ward was ended with the inauguration in June of 1861, of a new policy by Ward in consultation with Admiral Hope. This involved the abandoning of all attempts to recruit British servicemen and the enlisting and training of a Chinese force under foreign officers.²¹ The part played by Hope in this change in Ward's force is difficult to define in precise terms; and it most definitely was enacted without the prior or subsequent permission of Bruce or the Admiralty.²²

¹⁷Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons and House of Lords) (Hereinafter referred to as BPP), 1862, Vol. LXIII, Cmd. 2976, "Papers Relating to the Rebellion in China and Trade on the Yang-tze-kiang River," Meadows to Bruce, Shanghai, May 6, 1861, pp. 60-61; and Deposition of John Hinton taken at Shanghai, May 2, 1861, p. 61.

¹⁸Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion," CM, XXI:6, 629.

¹⁹Morse, International Relations, Vol. II, fn. 28, pp.71-72.

²⁰Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion," CM, XXI:6, 629.

²¹Ibid., 629. There is a possibility that Ward may have commenced the enlisting and training of Chinese soldiers to a small degree shortly before the conference with Hope in June of 1861. Frederick Bruce in Peking mentioned in a dispatch written before the conference that "Ward, it appears, besides the Foreign Legion, has undertaken to drill a body of Chinese in the employment of the Imperial Government." This is in BPP, 1862, Vol. LXIII, "Papers Relating to the Rebellion in China," Bruce to Russell, Peking, May 23, 1861, p. 59.

²²This statement is based on a survey of government material, including some Admiralty material. See bibliography.

Edward Forester, in his autobiographical article in the Cosmopolitan Magazine, indicated that Hope initiated the conference with Ward that led to the change in the recruitment of the force.

Within a brief time (after Ward's arrest and escape) a letter came from Admiral Sir James Hope, offering safe conduct to General Ward, Colonel Burgevine and myself if we would come down to the flagship for a conference.

This meeting was destined to have a most important bearing on the future of the Tai-Ping rebellion. The British admiral was brought around to a new view of foreign interference with the Tai-Pings. We gave assurances that we would no longer recruit our army from his man-of-war's-men and the admiral promised to exert all possible influence with the British Minister at Peking, and with the Home Government. From that day Admiral Hope became our strong friend and rendered us service whenever it was possible.²³

How Hope rendered Ward's new force aid in its initial stages is not clear, but certainly Ward and his army suffered less harassment and persecution from the British military authorities. It is a reasonable assumption that at this period Hope was more concerned with the immediate problem of the desertion of military personnel than with the long range and broader possibilities of a modernized and foreign drilled Chinese force. But after the renewal of Taiping pressure on Shanghai in early 1862, Ward was sold British arms and supplies at cost price.²⁴

After several months "hard work" Ward and his officers ". . . had in shape three thousand well-drilled [Chinese] troops."²⁵ The United Defense Bureau through Taki continued to support the force financially, but beyond this it is difficult to ascertain the relationship between the new force and the Chinese authorities and the defense bureau.

²³Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion," CM, XXI:6, 629.

²⁴J.S. Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 124. In Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office 17, General Correspondence - China (Hereinafter referred to as FO 17.) Vol. 375, Staveley to Bruce, Headquarters, Shanghai, November 13, 1862, folios 111-112, Staveley noted that the force had just received from England 10,000 stands of arms, twelve 12lb guns and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition.

²⁵Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion," CM, XXII:1 (November, 1896), 34.

However, the United Defense Bureau's members were not without disagreement as to the role of Ward's force in either its old or new form.²⁶ The Shanghai and Chekiang members were concerned mainly with protecting Shanghai and its trade routes.²⁷ The refugees from Kiangsu proper wanted to free their own districts in the province. It was generally agreed by all that the best means to secure Shanghai and to regain the province would be to induce Tsêng Kuo-fan, supreme commander of the Taiping suppression campaign, to send some of the Hsiang-chün to Shanghai and use it as a base of operation in his campaign against the Taipings.

From 1860 to 1862 various groups in Shanghai suggested such a move to Tsêng. Initially, Tsêng was not in favour of allocating men to Shanghai. Simply put, because of its coastal position on the periphery of rebel holdings Shanghai did not occupy a significant role in Tsêng's plan to crush the Taipings at the centre, Nanking, as rapidly as possible. More important in his plan than Shanghai was Chin-chiang, located forty miles east of Nanking and controlling the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal. It was a far better base for a westward thrust into rebel positions, especially Nanking. Tsêng planned to send Li Hung-chang to Chin-chiang, where, in conjunction with forces at Hangchow, Li would make a drive through to Nanking. Only after taking Nanking would Tsêng's forces move east into occupied Kiangsu.

The decision to send troops was finally made in Shanghai's favour. The numerous requests for aid from the merchants and gentry and the wealth of Shanghai convinced Tsêng of the necessity of opening a new front there. Also the importance of the revenues of Shanghai in the support of the Hsiang-chün and the necessity of keeping this

²⁶Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, pp. 31-50.

²⁷There were many well established merchants and gentry from Chekiang in Shanghai. According to ibid., p. 30 they were quite well established in the business community and government of Shanghai.

wealth out of rebel hands cannot be underestimated as a factor influencing Tsêng's decision.

Tsêng ordered Li Hung-chang to raise an army, the Huai-chün, in Anhui out of the local defense groups on the plan pioneered by Tsêng in the early 1850's. While he was doing this, Tsêng, in his capacity as governor-general, was manoeuvring to have the Governor of Kiangsu, Hsüeh Huan, removed on charges of incompetence and corruption. He hoped to have Li appointed as governor in his place, and in this he was ultimately successful.

In April of 1862, Li Hung-chang, his new army - the Huai-chün and a detachment of Tsêng's veterans arrived at Shanghai by steamer from Anking. The establishment of Li at Shanghai also occasioned a new strategy in the Taiping suppression campaign. This new strategy, followed to the successful conclusion of the war, divided the campaign region into three sections. The campaigns in all three sections were under the direction of men of Tsêng's selection and the forces used were essentially reformed armies based on Tsêng's model. In the south, Tso Tsung-t'ang was to work his way up from Kiangsi, to clear Chekiang of rebels and to keep rebel forces in Kiangsu and Ankui from filtering south. In Kiangsu, Li Hung-chang was to clear the province of rebels and to push through to Nanking. In the centre was Tsêng Kuo-fan and his brother, Tsêng Kuo-ch'uan, who had the task of clearing the Nanking area of rebels and laying siege to the city.

Li Hung-chang's arrival in Shanghai occurred a few months after the reopening of the Taiping offensive under the Chung Wang (Li Hsiu-chêng) in the Shanghai area. This signalled the termination of the one year truce arranged by Admiral Hope with the Taipings for the security of Shanghai and a radius of thirty miles.²⁸ On January 11, 1862 the Taiping forces appeared at Wu-sung and on the thirteenth were within a mile and a half of the foreign settlement of Shanghai.²⁹

²⁸Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings, pp. 95-110.

²⁹Morse, International Relations, II, 73.

On February 15, the Taipings approached the native city of Shanghai, shelled it briefly and then retired. The Taipings did not attack the foreign settlement itself, but their proximity and control of the surrounding countryside led the English and French military commanders to deem it necessary to clear the thirty mile radius of rebels.³⁰

Meanwhile, Ward and his force of Chinese were defending Sung-chiang from the Taipings. The force threatening Sung-chiang was defeated by Ward at nearby Kwangfuling.³¹ This would appear to be the first large action of Ward's Chinese force. The North China Herald wrote of the event in more favourable terms than in previous articles on Ward's activities. It described the victory as due to

. . .the bravery and discipline of the imperial troops under the command of Colonel Ward - who has trained a regiment of fine able-bodied men in the European system of military tactics.³²

This more favourable view of Ward's force was also being expressed by the British military at Shanghai. The immediate result of this new favour was the assistance of the British and French forces in Ward's attempt to take Kaochia (Kachiao) near Wu-sung. Ward had been directed by Hsüeh Huan to take this strategic village. But, owing to the garrison requirements of Sung-chiang, he had only 600 men for the operation. Upon being approached by Ward, Hope and the French naval commander, Admiral Protêt, ". . . considered the case to be one calling for . . .[British and French] interference. . . ."³³ This joint operation was the first instance of any manner of support of, or cooperation with Ward by the French or British.

The success of the joint operation on February 21, 1862 led to an informal agreement of cooperation by Ward, Hope and Protêt in forcing the Taipings out of the thirty mile zone. Most of 1862 was

³⁰Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings, pp. 120-122.

³¹Morse, International Relations, II, 73.

³²"The Taiping Rebels Near Shanghai," NCH, XIII:603 (February 15, 1862), p. 27.

³³BPP, 1862, Vol. LXIII, Cmd. 2992, "Further Papers Relating to the Rebellion in China," Hope to Secretary to Admiralty, Imperieuse at Shanghai, February 22, 1862, pp. 176-177.

occupied with a see-saw struggle between the Taipings and the allied forces in capturing and recapturing towns and villages within the thirty mile radius. In this campaign, Ward's force cooperated primarily with the Anglo-French forces rather than acting only as an adjunct to the imperialist forces.

Quite early in this campaign, Ward received recognition from Peking for his part in the victories over the Taipings.³⁴ For the victory at Nan-ch'iao on March 1, Ward was commissioned by imperial decree with the rank of Chentai (brigadier-general) in the Chinese army, and the title of "The Ever Victorious Army" was bestowed on his force. A few months later Ward was promoted to titu (major-general).³⁵ It was probably at this time that the force came to be paid either in part or in whole from the public treasury at Shanghai rather than only from private subscription.³⁶ However, Taki, in his capacity as circuit intendant, still acted as paymaster.

³⁴Morse, International Relations, II, 74 and 77.

³⁵To place these rewards at their actual worth two points should be kept in mind. The first is that in China in time of war military commissions were readily given to persons commanding forces formed for the emergency. For example, the rank of titu was normally limited to the chief military commander of each province, but in time of war there may be up to 200 officers of this rank in each province. See Wilson, The Ever-Victorious Army, Appendix I, p. 383. The second point is that Peking was following a policy of small and meaningless rewards to Ward and this probably included his commission, promotion, and the name of his force. In an edict to Li Hung-chang at the time of his appointment to Acting-Governor of Kiangsu and about the same time as Ward's promotions, Li was advised: "As for Ward and others who seek both fame and fortune, he [Li] should also fraternize with them, even to the expense of making small rewards." J.C. Cheng, Chinese Sources for the Taiping Rebellion, 1850-1864 (Hereinafter referred to as Chinese Sources.) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1963), Edict to Li Hung-chang, May 16, 1862, p. 94.

³⁶It is difficult to place an exact date on this, but it has been established that by at least July 1862 the force was receiving funds from the Customs revenue. See Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, July 10, 1862 and August 3, 1862, pp. 98-100.

The continuing success of Ward's force held the attention of the British military commanders at Shanghai. Both Admiral Hope and Sir John Michel, commanding officer of the British army in China, reported Ward's force in favourable terms to Sir Frederick Bruce, the British minister at Peking, as well as to their superiors in London. After the first joint action at Kaochia, Hope wrote of Ward's men:

The Chinese troops took the village to-day in a very good style, many of them behaving with much gallantry, supported by the French and English force, which was not seriously engaged.³⁷

The next day, Hope wrote Bruce of the potential value of the force:

Colonel Ward, upon whose experience of the Chinese I am disposed to place very considerable reliance, assures me that if Imperialist garrisons were placed in the towns. . . [around Shanghai] . . ., with the troops under his command used as a flying column, he could eventually prevent the return of the rebels within the limits . . . [of the thirty mile radius]. . ., even if they were disposed to attempt it³⁸

Michel visited Ward's force while encamped at Sung-chiang, just previous to his leaving his post in China. His subsequent dispatch to Bruce spoke of Ward's work in the most positive of terms. He found the force armed with good percussion firelocks and with some knowledge of western drill. In a vein similar to Hope, he wrote:

From what I saw, and the report already made by the Naval Officers of their conduct, I am of opinion that 1000 men of this description and thus drilled are quite competent to deal with many thousands of Rebels and that an augmentation of this force would enable Colonel Ward to clear the country by degrees. I consider this force, if duly supported, the military nucleus of better things.³⁹

Michel felt that Ward should be given at least 8,000 to 10,000 men and secure funds by the Chinese government.

³⁷BPP, 1862, Vol. LXIII, Cmd. 2992, "Further Papers Relating to the Rebellion in China," Hope to Secretary to Secretary of Admiralty, Imperieuse at Shanghai, February 21, 1862, pp. 176-177.

³⁸Ibid., Hope to Bruce, Imperieuse at Shanghai, February 22, 1862, p. 222.

³⁹FO 17/371, Michel to Bruce, Shanghai, February 28, 1862, folios 195-200.

Bruce and the Reform of the Chinese Armed Forces

The views of Michel and Hope on the abilities and value of the Chinese force under Ward were quite in keeping with those of a broader nature being expressed quite independently by Bruce at Peking. According to his despatch of February 23, 1862 to Lord Russell at the Foreign Office, Bruce was attempting to rouse Prince Kung, Wên-hsiang and other government officials to the necessity of not only taking steps for the protection of Shanghai but for the overall improvement of their military system.⁴⁰

One can readily understand the British view of the necessity of China contributing more to the defense of Shanghai, one of her own cities. If the Chinese were unable, or unwilling, to defend Shanghai, then undoubtedly Britain would be forced to continue defending the city because of the extensive British properties and large number of British residents there. Britain could not take the risk of allowing the city to fall into the turmoil of the civil war. But the continuation of the responsibility of the city's defense could be a prolonged and expensive undertaking and one not popular with the home government so soon after the conclusion of an expensive and lengthy war in China.⁴¹ One further point about the involvement of British forces at Shanghai was that it made Britain, in the estimation of the Taipings and the Manchus, a supporter of the Manchu government. Bruce wanted the disengagement of British forces as an insurance policy:

To enable us to escape an embarrassing position without a rupture with the Imperial government should the Taipings show, which they have not hitherto done, a capacity to govern the country, and not destroy it.⁴²

⁴⁰FO 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 23, 1862, folios 148-166.

⁴¹The cost of maintaining the armed forces in China just for the period between 1859 and 1862 was approximately f5,650,000.

⁴²FO 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 23, 1862, folios 148-166.

Considering the strong Taiping offensive launched in early 1862 against the Shanghai region, these factors took on a certain immediacy.

Bruce warned Peking that Britain would not continue to assume any responsibility for the defense of Shanghai and that the responsibility was entirely in their hands.⁴³ In making this warning Bruce does not appear to be aware of the almost simultaneous preparations to transfer Li Hung-chang and his newly formed army to Shanghai, or of the abilities and potentialities of Ward's Chinese force. However, Bruce had no intention of immediately withdrawing British troops and leaving a vacuum in the defense of Shanghai. He hoped that by threatening to leave Shanghai in the lurch he could pressure or ". . . stimulate this government to exertion and to the improvement of their military system, which can only be effected by foreign training."

His plan to improve China's military system would not apply just to Shanghai, but, hopefully, to the system in its entirety. As outlined or suggested in Bruce's dispatch of February 23, 1862, there were several reasons for this concern for the state of China's armed forces. First, there was the continual and widespread destruction and chaos of civil war and banditry which the armed forces of China seemed incapable of stemming, at least in the foreseeable future. Bruce would appear to have feared the continuation of the stalemate situation where neither the Taipings or the Manchus had sufficient strength to put a quick end to the rebellion. The Taipings would continue to pose a threat to Shanghai and the civil war would continue to disrupt inland trade and silk and tea production. In addition to the Taipings, disturbances were occurring elsewhere in China, notably the Nien-fei in the northern provinces, the Panthays in the southwest, plus numerous bandit groups throughout China. Bruce informed Russell

⁴³Ibid., folios 148-166.

that

. . . it is only by the construction of a force on sound principles of military organization that anarchy and brigandage can be repressed and that our great trading interests imperatively call upon us to facilitate the attempt,⁴⁴

Bruce also felt that the substitution of smaller, organized and paid armies would diminish the extent of the looting and damage to trade and production created by an imperial army in the field.⁴⁵

Another motive for Bruce's concern for China's armed forces lies with the increasing interest in China of other foreign powers, especially Russia. China had been an almost exclusive British preserve for several decades and the increasing involvement and interest of other foreign powers was viewed with some apprehension. Considering China's weak military situation this interest could take the form of war for the gain of Chinese territory or an improved commercial and political position in China. Such a war would not necessarily be to Britain's advantage. There was also the danger of intervention, direct or indirect, in the civil war. According to William James Hail, biographer of Tsêng Kuo-fan, in late 1860 the Russians offered, through their Peking representative Nicolas Ignatieff, to place at the Chinese government's disposal a naval force of 300 or 400 men to cooperate in capturing Nanking.⁴⁶ The Russians did give the Chinese government 10,000 stands of small arms and eight guns.⁴⁷ The arms arrived sometime in the

⁴⁴Ibid., folios 148-166.

⁴⁵Ibid., folios 148-166.

⁴⁶Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan, pp. 227-228. According to Hail this offer of aid was turned down partly due to the advice of Tsêng Kuo-fan, who, besides feeling that an attempt on Nanking at that time would be premature, opposed the involvement of foreign soldiers in China's interior. Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings, pp. 116-117 states that Prince Kung also strongly opposed the use of foreign troops in the interior.

⁴⁷FO 17/372, Bruce to Russell, Peking, July 2, 1862, folios 287-288; and, D.F. Rennie, Peking and Pekingese During the First Year of the British Embassy at Peking (Hereinafter referred to as Peking and the Pekingese.) (London: John Murray, 1865), II, 304, 318-319. According to Rennie, a Mr. Richards, who saw the weapons near Kiachta, described the small arms as being muskets and that "The specimens of

winter of 1861-62 and a few Chinese were trained in the use and maintenance of them. Hail felt that the Russian offer of aid at Nanking could have influenced Britain's tendency to increased involvement in the civil war in a desire to prevent the Russians from securing any of the Yangtze trade which Great Britain regarded as her prerogative.⁴⁸ Certainly, throughout the period under study, there was constant interest in and numerous rumours of, Russian aid in the rebellion. However, the fear of foreign involvement is not expressed by Bruce in these exact terms. Bruce feared that the combination of aggressive foreign powers and China's chaotic military situation

. . . can only result in the destruction of the country, or in its falling a prey to any foreign power which will promise efficient security to the inhabitants against murder and rapine.⁴⁹

Bruce would not appear to have been quickened in his decision to help China modernize her armies by an anticipation that Russia would develop a similar and, consequently, rival plan. He readily noted the weapons received by China from Russia, but felt that:

Beyond this, I do not think the Russians have taken steps to assist the Chinese in improving their military system, and though I have no reason to doubt that they will see with pleasure the suppression of the insurrection, I do not apprehend that they are likely to be active in promoting any serious improvement of the Chinese forces in the north of China. I think there is a feeling among them that the Chinese, well disciplined and armed would require to be treated with ménagement, and that territorial questions would not be so easily of settlement if her national forces were more developed.⁵⁰

(Footnote 47 continued). muskets he saw did not favourably impress him; they looked old, as if the wood-work would not last long." Also, Rennie was told by Colonel de Baluzac of the Russian Legation that the arms had originally been promised to the Chinese in 1858, ". . . in consideration of the latter having ceded the territory beyond the Amoor, but that when the time came for delivering the arms, hostilities were imminent between the Chinese and the English and French. Such being the case, the Russian Government did not consider it the proper period to be sending arms to China, and therefore withheld them until the present time, when everything is peaceful"

⁴⁸Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan, p. 229.

⁴⁹FO 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 23, 1862, folios 148-166.

⁵⁰FO 17/371, Bruce to Russell, Peking, July 2, 1862, folios 287-288.

As to the dangers to British interests in introducing modern military techniques into China, Bruce felt that they were non-existent. He sincerely felt the advantages of an improved military system more than counterbalanced any possible dangers. He informed Russell that:

To this [danger of an improved military system] it may be replied with truth, that any risk arising from this cause is far less serious than the danger commercial and political we incur from the unchecked growth of anarchy throughout China. But further I am firmly convinced that we who neither seek territory, nor promote by arms religious conversion, have little to apprehend from any success that may attend our efforts to raise the Chinese executive out of its present helpless condition Nor do I consider that it will be a matter of regret or hostile to our interests that China should be encouraged by a consciousness of her strength to use bolder language in defence of her just rights. The weakness of China rather than her strength is likely to create a fresh Eastern question In proportion also as the Chinese are obliged to resort to us for instruction the policy of isolation and contempt for the outer world, from which our difficulties have mainly arisen must be abandoned.⁵¹

Bruce was very optimistic about the chances of success of a programme of military reform. He believed that there were elements in the Chinese government and military establishment that were seriously interested in reforming and improving China's armed forces. As examples of these reform elements, he pointed out the improved organization and discipline of the armies of Tsêng Kuo-fan and Seng Ko-lin-ch'ín. He told Russell that:

It appears to me, therefore, that just ideas of military administration do prevail, to a certain extent, among those who govern China, and that, apart from all other considerations, they afford a ground on which to attempt to reconstitute the country.⁵²

However, Bruce felt that the assistance given must not be too direct because:

. . . it takes away the only motive, namely that of self-preservation, which will be strong enough to enable those, who see these evils, to break through the shackles imposed by availing themselves in a teachable spirit of the experience and of the arts of Western nations.⁵³

⁵¹FO 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, March 26, 1862, folios 352-361.

⁵²FO 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 23, 1862, folios 148-166.

⁵³FC 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 23, 1862, folios 148-166.

Bruce retained these ideas on the important role that Britain could play in reforming China's military establishment throughout the period under study. The key elements of his ideas were that Britain's role should be limited to training these new armies not leading them into warfare, and that the establishment of these new forces should be done under Peking's direction and control.

British Training Programmes in China

Peking responded in some degree to Bruce's suggestions of military improvement. In February of 1862, the first step was taken with the imperial government detaching, at the suggestion of Bruce, a number of Manchus to be instructed at Tientsin under British officers.⁵⁴ This initial step and Bruce's opinion and representations to the Chinese government as outlined in his dispatch of February 23, 1862 received the full approval of the Foreign Office in London.⁵⁵

The immediate purpose of this training scheme was to provide an adequate replacement for the Anglo-French garrison at Tientsin, which was to be withdrawn within a few months.⁵⁶ But in addition, it most definitely was viewed by Bruce as part of his general plan of military improvement; for, he informed Staveley, commander of the British forces at Tientsin, that the Chinese force would serve ". . . as a model for the future improvement of their military system."⁵⁷

Bruce was under the impression that the rapid and willing response to his offer of military instruction was the result of his approach to the Tsung-li yamen. But the response must be considered within the framework of the still very nascent T'ung-chih Restoration and its accompanying self-strengthening movement.⁵⁸ The men in command

⁵⁴Ibid., folios 148-166.

⁵⁵FO 17/368, Foreign Office to Bruce, Foreign Office, London, June 2, 1862, folio 218.

⁵⁶FO 17/370, Staveley to Tsung how (Ch'ung-hou), Headquarters, Tientsin, February 16, 1862, folio 196; and, Rennie, Peking and the Pekingese, II, 172 and 249.

⁵⁷FO 17/370, Bruce to Staveley, Peking, February 23, 1862, folio 198.

⁵⁸Mary Clabaugh Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism - The T'ung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874 (New York: Atheneum, 1967); and, Ssu-yü Têng and John K. Fairbank, China's Response to the West - A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923 (New York: Atheneum, 1966).

of the government were beginning to realize that China must improve her military establishment to suppress rebellion and to defend herself against future foreign aggression. According to William Mayers, a Briton in China at this time, it was the Anglo-French invasion of northern China in 1860 that brought about the full realization of the pitiful state of the defenses of Peking.⁵⁹ Previous to the approach by Bruce with his offers of aid and suggestions of improvement, important elements in the Manchu government, notably Wên-hsiang, were pressing for some form of military improvement. Specifically, Wên-hsiang wanted the formation of a corps of bannermen trained and equipped in the western manner to provide for the future defense of Peking.⁶⁰ The restricted nature of the Russian training in the use and maintenance of their arms provided in the winter of 1861-62 was found by Peking to be extremely unsatisfactory for this purpose.⁶¹ When Bruce approached the Tsung-li yamen with his offer, he was received enthusiastically by Wên-hsiang.⁶²

Another important factor in the Tientsin training project, and in all subsequent projects, was the acceptance on the local level of the scheme. Bruce tended to underestimate the importance of local acceptance of training projects, but, as shall be shown, local officials through their willingness to participate in and finance these schemes were the key to their success. However, at Tientsin local officials were extremely fearful " . . . that in the event of the British troops being withdrawn, Tien-tsin will be in a position of considerable danger

⁵⁹William Frederick Mayers, The Chinese Government (3rd. ed., revised by G.M.H. Playfair; Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1897; reprinted by Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1966), p. 61.

An interesting point of comparison is the similar reaction by Lin Tsê-hsü and Wei Yüan on the experience of the First Anglo-Chinese War (1839-1842). Both readily recognized the military superiority of the British and called for China to adopt foreign techniques and devices, especially ships and guns. Unfortunately for China this advice of self-strengthening was ignored.

⁶⁰Fang Chao-ying, "Wên-hsiang," Eminent Chinese, II, 854.

⁶¹Masataka Banno, China and the West, 1858-1861 - The Origins of the Tsungli Yamen (Hereinafter referred to as China and the West.), p.332.

⁶²FO 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 23, 1862, folios 148-166.

from outward aggression, as the country about is not in an over-satisfactory state."⁶³ On January 23, 1862 Ch'ung-hou, the superintendent of trade, consulted with Staveley

. . . in reference to the best means of defending Tientsin on its evacuation by the British forces. Tsun-how [Ch'ung-hou] proposed that two hundred men, of whom forty were to be artillerymen, should be instructed in European tactics, and that when sufficiently perfected in them, they should be sent to instruct ten thousand more. The Brigadier-General referred this proposal to Mr. Bruce, which, however, did not differ materially from what had . . . been . . . determined on,⁶⁴

The training project at Tientsin commenced on February 24, 1862 with an initial class of seventy-eight officers and men, who were drilled in British infantry and artillery methods by men and officers of the 67th Regiment.⁶⁵ The project did not end with the withdrawal of British troops from Tientsin in May of 1862, but was transferred to Taku.⁶⁶ A small detachment under a Captain Coney was stationed there until 1865 to conduct the training project.

The Tientsin-Taku training programme was quite successful. Peking never hesitated to provide men to be trained and by the end of 1862 the force had grown to two battalions.⁶⁷ In addition to the Russian weapons the project was provided with a large number of obsolete smooth bore muskets and cannon obtained from British stores at reduced cost by Bruce.⁶⁸ The North China Herald wrote of the trained Chinese in the most favourable of terms:

That the Chinese are capable of attaining the highest military efficiency as disciplined troops, is proved by the singular success

⁶³Rennie, Peking and the Pekingese, II, 172.

⁶⁴Ibid., II, 249.

⁶⁵Ibid., II, 272-273; and, "Retrospect of Events in North-China During 1862," NCH, XIV:650 (January 10, 1863), p. 7.

⁶⁶Banno, China and the West, p. 241.

⁶⁷"Retrospect of Events in North-China During 1862," NCH, XIV:650, p. 7; and, Rennie, Peking and the Pekingese, II, 290.

⁶⁸Banno, China and the West, fn. 26, p. 332; FO 17/370, Bruce to Hope, Peking, February 22, 1862, folios 200-201; FO 17/371, Bruce to Hope, Peking, April 23, 1862, folios 234-236; and, FO 17/370, Bruce to Staveley, Peking, February 23, 1862, folio 198.

of this movement in the north, which had gone on progressively until there was at the close of the year two battalions of disciplined Chinese serving with our troops remaining at the Taku forts. These battalions, on the authority of military officers, . . . , are represented as performing their duties with a precision and steadiness that will vie with the best drilled troops in Europe.⁶⁹

As the troops were trained at Tientsin or Taku, Peking transferred them in distinct units to other armies in northern China, often for immediate use against bandits.⁷⁰ However, it would appear that most of the trained soldiers were channeled into the Shen Chi Ying (The Peking or Metropolitan Field Force), a force organized in 1862 for the specific purpose of defending Peking.⁷¹ By 1877 the Shen Chi Ying numbered some 18,000 or 20,000 men, including cavalry, artillery and infantry regiments, all of which were still being trained in the European manner as learnt at Tientsin and Taku from British instructors from 1862 to 1865.⁷²

In March of 1862, Bruce received the recommendations of Hope and Michel that the Chinese force under Ward be expanded by the Chinese government and that it take a major role in keeping the Shanghai area clear of rebels. Bruce immediately placed the work done by Ward into the context of his recently launched military reform project. Viewing the success of Ward's efforts at Shanghai, he informed Russell that:

In the Chinese force organized and led by Mr. Ward, I see the nucleus and beginning of a military organization, which may prove most valuable in the distracted state of China. If the government is wise enough to adopt this reform, it may save itself; if not, the organization of this description of force at the Chief Ports will at all events preserve them from destruction.⁷³

⁶⁹"Retrospect of Events in North-China During 1862," NCH, XIV:650, p. 7. Also see Rennie, Peking and the Pekingese, II, 272, 278, and 297.

⁷⁰FO 17/391, Bruce to Russell, Peking, April 8, 1863, folios 27-30; Coney to Bruce, Tsien-kia-Tchang, March 9, 1863, folios 32-36; and, FO 17/407, Bruce to Russell, Peking, January 13, 1864, folio 58.

⁷¹Banno, China and the West, fn. 26, p. 332; Fao Chao-ying, "Wên-hsiang," Eminent Chinese, II, 854; and Mayers, The Chinese Government, p. 61.

⁷²Mayers, The Chinese Government, p. 61.

⁷³FO 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, March 26, 1862, folios 352-361.

Bruce was quite optimistic on the basis of these two independent successes - the response to the Tientsin project and the success of Ward's disciplined Chinese force. He confidently embarked on the next stage, the reorganizing of the Chinese forces at the treaty ports. His plan, according to his dispatches to Hope, was to direct attention to the forming at Canton, Foochow and other treaty ports corps like Ward's to protect them against marauders and to replace the huge, useless and expensive Chinese forces stationed there.⁷⁴ As at Tientsin, the training would be done by British officers. Smooth bore muskets and artillery pieces would be supplied at low cost from surplus British stores. The officers that would lead these troops would be retrained Chinese or Manchu officers.

The position to be held by Ward's force in this scheme is not clearly indicated by Bruce. But, Bruce did not at this stage display any intention of having Ward replaced in the command of his force by a British officer. Bruce would seem to have looked upon Ward's force as a special addition to his own project for Shanghai, which was the eventual conversion of the 40,000 useless troops under Hsüeh Huan into 20,000 to 25,000 disciplined troops.⁷⁵ In fact, Bruce offered Ward's force what assistance he could. In April, Staveley, then at Shanghai, was instructed to aid and encourage Ward's force and to help him form a Chinese artillery corps to facilitate the retaking of towns.⁷⁶

To put his plan of reorganizing the Chinese forces at the treaty ports into effect, in May of 1862, once again Bruce approached the Tsung-li yamen with his suggestions.⁷⁷ He did not work directly

⁷⁴FO 17/371, Bruce to Hope, Peking, March 26, 1862, folios 93-95; and, FO 17/371, Bruce to Hope, April 23, 1862, folios 234-236.

⁷⁵FO 17/370, Bruce to Russell, Peking, March 26, 1862, folios 352-361.

⁷⁶FO 17/371, Bruce to Staveley, Peking, April 23, 1862, folios 224-232.

⁷⁷FO 17/371, Bruce to Russell, Peking, May 8, 1862, folios 297-308; and, FO 17/373, Bruce to Kung, Peking, May 12, folios 22-23.

through Chinese officials or interested gentry on the treaty port level as Ward had done. Using somewhat the same pressure tactics as he had used a few months earlier, Bruce warned that Britain could only protect British interests in the treaty ports and that the Chinese troops, including the new regional forces, were incapable of defending the ports. The warning was followed by a promise that British forces would cooperate in the defense of those treaty ports where bodies of infantry and artillery were found properly equipped, properly paid and properly instructed. He further suggested the immediate founding of such bodies with direct British assistance in their training. The services of Captain Caine, R.A., who had been training the Chinese artillery at Tientsin, were offered to form some of the additional Chinese artillery units. At other cities where there were Royal Navy ships, naval personnel would be provided as instructors for artillery forces. This emphasis on artillery was not unusual, for Bruce was constantly stressing artillery as the key to an effective modern Chinese army.

The Manchu response to Bruce's new round of suggestions was guarded and cautious. In a note to Bruce, dated June 22, Prince Kung of the Tsung-li yamen stated that Bruce's friendly concern and suggestions were appreciated and that it had been decided that

. . . after Tientsin, at which a commencement had been made, Shanghae is the place at which military organization will be best effected, as being the place sorest pressed,⁷⁸

The note stated further that the governor of Kiangsu, the newly appointed Li Hung-chang, had been instructed to act accordingly.⁷⁹ But,

. . . to drill troops there must be funds provided to pay them, and whether the funds [of Kiang-su] will be sufficient or not, the Governor of Kiang-su must carefully ascertain, to ensure the proposed measure against abandonment when but half carried out.⁸⁰

⁷⁸FO 17/373, Kung to Bruce, translation, Peking, June 22, 1862, folios 24-28.

⁷⁹Cheng, Chinese Sources, Edict to Li Hung-chang, May 16, 1862, p. 94. The edict was vaguely worded on the subject of military instruction: "The said Acting Governor should make greater endeavours to drill his troops to please the foreigners."

⁸⁰FO 17/373, Kung to Bruce, translation, Peking, June 22, 1862, folios 24-28.

Kung vaguely promised to provide for the organization of forces at Foochow and other ports if sufficient funds could be found.

This limiting of the training scheme outside of Tientsin and Taku to Shanghai could have been necessitated by the financial difficulties of the provincial governments in this period of insurrection.⁸¹ It is quite likely that the provincial treasuries could not accomodate the very expensive modernization programmes. But in view of the positive response to the Tientsin-Taku project, it is possible that Peking was not anxious to provide similar improvement in the military capabilities of armies that were often under more regional than imperial control. However at this stage, it is more likely that local officials were not inclined to spend their revenues or "foreign" training for their troops. Another motive for this poor response could be the fear of increased foreign control of military matters.⁸²

⁸¹Financial difficulties in regard to western training programmes are cited by the Chinese on several occasions. For example, in regard to the Tientsin project, the Chinese commandant at Tientsin, Shih-lung, ". . . who, while he approved of the proposition to employ officers in drilling Chinese troops, said that he was as at a loss, however, to see where the money was to come from to pay them, as both he and his troops were a whole year's pay in arrears." As cited in Rennie, Peking and the Pekingese, II, 247. Li Hung-chang often complained about the high cost of maintaining Ward's Ever Victorious Army. See Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, p. 78 and Cheng, Chinese Sources, pp. 99-100 for details on this matter.

On several occasions Bruce expressed his belief that the financial difficulty of the country was the chief block to the introduction of military reform. See FO 17/373, Bruce to Russell, Peking, July 8, 1862, folios 15-20; and FO 17/375, Bruce to Staveley, Peking, October 24, 1862, folios 101-102.

⁸²This distrust of foreign involvement in China's armed forces was expressed on several occasions. For example, see Tsêng Kuo-fan's advice in Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan, pp. 240-241, 256-258. A secret communication dated November 17, 1862 from the Tsung-li yamen via the viceroy of Kwangtung to the military officers at Canton (translated by Mayers in FO 17/393, folios 67-71) stated in part:

" . . . the temporary adoption of military instruction from the ocean-people [English], as a device for strengthening ourselves, has been entered upon for the sake of affording protection to the country. But, instruction being given by the ocean-people, the ocean-people are also employed as commanders of the troops; and thus as they both occupy the office of instructors and also participate in the authority of the military chiefs, manifold embarrassment is sure to be caused hereafter in the conduct of the campaign."

Shanghai was the most western dominated city in China, already the site of a large foreign troop concentration as well as foreign trained Chinese troops. Peking could have felt that it was far better to extend western domination there, than start it afresh somewhere else. In addition, a moderate response there would ensure continuation of British participation in the defense of the city.

Simultaneous to Bruce's efforts in Peking on behalf of Shanghai, the British military and consular representatives in Shanghai were independently presenting a similar plan to Li Hung-chang. In May of 1862, they requested Li to organize a corps of disciplined troops, the expense of which was to be provided by forming a charge of the customs' revenues.⁸³ But, as the British consul at Shanghai, Walter Henry Medhurst, noted in a letter to the Shanghai taotai:

. . . the Footai [Li Hung-chang] does not give the idea the cordial reception which I should have thought it would have naturally received at his hand. What his hesitation arises from I do not know. The Commander-in-Chief took pains yesterday to explain away his doubts, but he did not entirely give them up, and it was only after long discussion that he consented to the hiring of new levies [no more than 2,000] for drilling purposes.⁸⁴

In early June a small force of Chinese soldiers was placed at the disposal of Staveley for training purposes.⁸⁵ As previously noted, on June 22 the Tsung-li yamen had informed Bruce that Shanghai was the best place for a training programme and that Li had been instructed to act accordingly. Li had been sent an edict on May 16 with vague instructions to ". . . make greater endeavours to drill his troops to please the foreigners."⁸⁶ It would be a mistake to assume that Li's actions were motivated only by these vague instructions. In fact, it may well have been that when he agreed to the local

⁸³BPP, 1863, Vol. LXXIII, Cmd. 3104, "Further Papers Relating to the Rebellion in China," Medhurst to Taoutae of Shanghai, Shanghai, May 29, 1862, p. 395.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 395.

⁸⁵FO 17/373, Bruce to Kung, Peking, June 28, 1862, folios 102-105.

⁸⁶Cheng, Chinese Sources, Edict to Li Hung-chang, May 16, 1862, p. 94.

British proposals at the end of May, he had not yet received the instructions from Peking. Regardless, when this affair is examined within the context of Li's relations with the British military in Shanghai, his personal reasons for establishing a force become apparent.

The relationship between Li Hung-chang and the British military in Shanghai was one of extreme strain during the first few months of his office as governor.⁸⁷ The basic difficulty was the British insistence on joint military action completely under British command against the Taipings in the Shanghai area. Li flatly refused to surrender any of his authority or military forces to foreigners. But, Li readily recognized the value of the foreign troops in the defense of Shanghai and by no means wished to become so uncooperative as to cause their withdrawal.

In a letter written to Tsêng Kuo-fan on May 29, he stated:

They [the foreigners] always seem to suspect that I, Hung-chang, am not willing to co-operate with them. They say that they will soon withdraw the Western troops back to their home countries;. . . . If China is unwilling to co-operate, they will have to evacuate their troops. I, Hung-chang, shall say some tactful words to comfort them; if I can meet their wishes, I shall do so. I will never quarrel with them. Shanghai has to be protected by them.⁸⁸

Thus, the agreement by Li to provide troops for training, which was reached at about the same time as the above letter was written, should be viewed more as a conciliatory substitute for joint campaigning. Li continued his opposition towards joint operations despite threats of British withdrawal.⁸⁹

Further strength is given to this argument when Li's own plans on the subject of foreign trained Chinese troops are examined. In April of 1862, before he was ever approached by the British, Li wrote to Tsêng of a plan to placate the foreign military commanders and distract

⁸⁷See Cheng, Chinese Sources, pp. 92-96; BPP, 1862, Vol. LXIII, "Further Papers Relating to the Rebellion in China," Hope to Secretary to Admiralty, Imperieuse at Shanghai, May 31, 1862, pp. 253-254; and, BPP, 1863, Vol. LXXIII, Cmd. 3104, "Further Papers Relating to the Rebellion in China," Medhurst to Taoutae of Shanghai, May 29, 1862, p. 395.

⁸⁸Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, May 29, 1862, p. 95.

⁸⁹Ibid., Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, June 3, 1862, p. 95.

them from their constant proposals of joint campaigning.

I, Hung-chang, . . . , am not at the disposal of foreigners. As I hear that the British general is coming to pay a call, I shall allow him to see me, but will not agree to conduct a joint campaign. I . . . have thought of a plan of mutual advantage. After taking up my duties, I shall order the officials and gentry at the Joint Defense Bureau to select from among the various regiments under His Excellency Hsüeh two or three thousand men to be drilled and stationed together with foreign troops for the sole purpose of joint campaigning Such an arrangement would permit us to avoid much trouble in future.⁹⁰

A project conceived in this half-hearted manner was fated to difficulties from its inception. Whereas Staveley had been promised 2,000 recruits, he received only 300.⁹¹ The inadequate response by Li caused sharp complaint from Bruce and his counterparts in Shanghai, but there was little improvement. The well established excuse of inadequate funds was given by Kung as the reason why greater eagerness had not been shown by Li for the project.⁹²

By November, the training force had increased only to 650 men, still far too small a force to provide a substitute for the British presence in Shanghai.⁹³ Staveley had estimated that a minimum of 1,400 reliable (e.g. British) soldiers would be required just to hold the city of Shanghai.⁹⁴ However, the force, under Lieutenant Kingsley of the 67th Regiment and officered by men from the same regiment, was used with the British forces in their operations around Shanghai.⁹⁵ In November, the force, now generally referred to as Kingsley's Regiment,

⁹⁰Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, April 23, 1862, pp. 93-94. There is no evidence that he ever presented this specific plan to either Staveley or Hope. An interesting point about Li's plan is that he had no intention of using his own troops but rather those of the outgoing Hsüeh Huan.

⁹¹FO 17/373, Bruce to Kung, Peking, June 28, 1862, folios 102-105.

⁹²FO 17/373, Kung to Bruce, Peking, June 22, 1862, folios 24-28.

⁹³FO 17/399, Staveley to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, November 21, 1862, folios 97-100.

⁹⁴FO 17/372, Report on defense of Shanghai by Staveley, L.M. Govan and C.G. Gordon, Shanghai, May 30, 1862, folios 200-203.

⁹⁵Great Britain, Public Record Office, War Office 107, Journal of the Quarter-Master General's Department - China, Vol. 5, Part 3 (Hereinafter referred to as WO 107/5/Part 3), August 28, 1862, no foliation.

with its staff of British officers and instructors was handed over to Burgevine, then commanding the Ever Victorious Army.⁹⁶ This move was made on the basis of a promise to Staveley that he would receive 600 more recruits for the training programme. But, a few weeks later Kingsley and the force were recalled to Shanghai as the promise of new recruits had been withdrawn. The Kingsley Regiment never reached its intended size of 2,000, was never used in joint anti-Taiping operations with the Chinese armed forces under Li, nor does it appear to have been eventually absorbed into the Chinese armed forces. In 1864, with the conclusion of the Taiping Rebellion, it was disbanded completely.

⁹⁶FO 17/399, Staveley to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, November 21, 1862, folios 97-100; WO 107/5/Part 3, December 19, 1862, no foliation; and, FO 17/399, Staveley to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, December 23, 1862, folios 345-348.

CHAPTER III
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT CHINESE-BRITISH CONTROL OF THE
EVER VICTORIOUS ARMY

As has been shown in the preceeding chapter, the Ever Victorious Army and the British training programmes for the Chinese armed forces developed quite separately. Their origins and purposes were quite dissimilar. Up to the summer of 1862, British involvement in questions regarding the command and control of the Ever Victorious Army was minimal. But from this period on, British interest in and involvement in the force underwent a gradual intensification until by January 1863 the force was brought under joint Chinese-British control and a British officer was placed at its command. It is the purpose of this chapter to trace the development of this process, with special attention to its relationship with the British military training programmes and the British commitment to the defense of Shanghai.

Increasing British Involvement in the Ever Victorious Army

As the Kingsley Regiment was daily showing itself not to be a substitute for the British presence, pressures were developing that made the extensive British military involvement at Shanghai increasingly difficult to maintain. About one-half of all British combat troops designated for service in Hong Kong, Japan and China and a goodly proportion of the Royal Navy were being tied down in a campaign that had reached a stalemate condition by the summer of 1862.¹ There was no

¹FO 17/401, Memorandum on the forces in China, May 14, 1863, folios 35-36. On September 1, 1862 there was the following distribution of British troops in China:

North China - Shanghai, Taku, Fahwah	- European troops	- 2017
	- Indian troops	- 1049
	North China Total	- 3066
South China - Hong Kong, Kowloon, Stanley		
	- European troops	- 1125
	- Indian troops	- 418
	- Lascars (non-combatant)	- 70
	South China Total	- 1613
	Total for all China	- 4679

In BPP, 1863, Vol. XXXIII, "Copy of the Correspondence between the

indication of improvement in the near future and in all probability the heavy concentration of British troops for the defense of Shanghai would be necessary for an indefinite length of time. Although the Foreign Office had given permission for the stationing of troops at Shanghai so long as that settlement was menaced by rebels, Staveley felt that the forces at his disposal were not sufficient to meet all probable requirements.² The troops being used were almost entirely those left in China after the war to ensure fulfilment of the treaty arrangement and many of them had been slated for transfer to India or England.³ There was no indication from London, nor was there likely to be, about reinforcements, or even replacements for those troops that would eventually have to leave for their new postings. In addition, the Hong Kong garrison was seriously understrength and the situation in Japan could possibly require a strong force on short notice.⁴

Coupled to this serious manpower shortage was the worst cholera epidemic to hit Shanghai in foreign memory.⁵ Because of the overcrowded and unsanitary condition of their barracks, the troops

(Footnote 1 continued.) Military Authorities in Shanghai as a Station for European troops; and, Numerical Return of Sickness and Mortality of the Troops of all arms at Shanghai, . . .," Proceedings of a Board of Medical Officers . . . , pp. 447-449, the number of soldiers and sailors stationed at Shanghai between April 23, 1862 and October 7, 1862 as follows:

British army:	- 2064
British navy:	- 1411
French army:	- 733
French navy:	- 610

²FO 17/369, Foreign Office to Bruce, July 7, 1862, folios 3-4; and FO 17/401, Memorandum on the forces in China, May 14, 1863, folios 35-36 contains reference to a report by Staveley that his forces were not sufficient to meet all probable requirements.

³According to Rennie, Peking and the Pekingese, I, viii, and II, 297, when Tientsin was evacuated in the spring of 1862 troops embarked for India and England were re-routed to Shanghai.

⁴WO 107/5/Part 3, Hong Kong, July 16, 1863, no foliation; and, FO 17/387, Mercer to Duke of Newcastle, Hong Kong, October 2, 1862, folios 23-25.

⁵NCH, XIII:640 (November 1, 1862), p. 174.

suffered far worse than Shanghai's civilian population. Between April 23 and October 7, 1862, 269 soldiers and sailors out of a total force of 3,475 died, the main cause of death being cholera.⁶ But nearly all of these deaths were concentrated in the European units as the Indian troops were not seriously affected by the disease.⁷ The epidemic caused serious consideration to be given to the prudence of stationing European troops at Shanghai under such conditions. The military medical authorities at Shanghai, principally Dr. D.F. Rennie, refused to accept that the improvement of barrack and general sanitary conditions would lead to any noticeable improvement in the health of the troops. Rather the army medical board at Shanghai recommended to Staveley, who in turn forwarded the recommendation to the Secretary of War, that:

. . . taking into consideration the physical character of the country in and around Shanghai, they are not sanguine of its ever proving a healthy station for European troops, an impression deserving considerable support from the fact during the present summer, so trying to Europeans, the Indian troops have been comparatively healthy.⁸

Under these new pressures it was essential that a substitute be found for the so far unsuccessful attempt at a programme of military

⁶BPP, 1863, Vol. XXXIII, "Copy of the Correspondence between the Military Authorities in Shanghai as a Station for European troops; . . . , " Proceedings of a Board of Medical Officers . . . , pp. 447-449. According to this document, the French suffered an even higher death rate with 138 deaths out of a total force of 1,343.

⁷NCH, XIII:640, p. 174. According to Rennie, Peking and the Pekingese, I, viii: .

" . . . [Shanghai] . . . encountered a cholera epidemic, in the course of which, two hundred and twenty soldiers of the Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, the 31st and 67th Regiments [these are all-white units] died, and of this number, nine only from the result of accident and the enemy's fire; in other words, during a space of time not much exceeding six months, the deaths amounted to sixteen out of every hundred men of the European force engaged."

⁸BPP, 1863, Vol. XXXIII, "Copy of the Correspondence between the Military Authorities in Shanghai as a Station for European troops; . . . , " Extract from letter of Staveley to Secretary of War, October 21, 1862, pp. 446-447.

improvement.⁹ Bruce's method of working through the Tsung-li yamen had been successful only with the Tientsin-Taku project, but it had had no effect on the Chinese armed forces as a whole and little effect at the individual treaty ports. Now even Bruce, who had once been very optimistic about the acceptance of his ideas by the Chinese, began to reassess the situation.¹⁰ Following the failure of the Shanghai project (the Kingsley Regiment), which can be dated as simultaneous to its half-hearted inception, there was a drift away from the introduction of projects through Bruce and Peking. The trend now was the taking of more realistic action by British authorities on location in connexion with interested local Chinese authorities. As has been shown the discussions surrounding the Kingsley Regiment already exhibited this development and, although it was not fully realized at the time, the support of local officials was basic to the success of the Tientsin and Taku programmes.

Before discussing how this transition manifested itself at Shanghai, it would be useful to discuss the developments at the only other two treaty ports, Canton and Ningpo, where the local approach achieved some success. In September of 1862, the governor-general of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, Lao Ch'ung-kuang, requested the British consul at Canton, Robertson, to obtain military instruction for Manchu and Chinese troops at Canton.¹¹ A small detachment of artillery and

⁹There was some discussion of bringing in large numbers of Indian troops, not only to replace the less hardy English troops, but to step-up British aid to the Chinese in suppressing the Taipings. However, strong opposition from the Chinese and from the War Office prevented any development along such lines. See Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan, pp. 256-258; and, Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings, p. 119.

¹⁰FO 17/373, Bruce to Russell, Peking, September 10, 1862, folios 335-338.

"The task of reorganizing the Chinese army is a slow one, and will only be done gradually, as the Chinese see the superiority of the men drilled at the Ports. But it is more easy to improve their armament, good firearms, with artillery, and a squadron of gunboats would give the Imperialists, even organized as they are, a great superiority over the Insurgents. My efforts at present are to induce the government to adopt these improvements,"

¹¹FO 17/375, Robertson to Bruce, Canton, October 7, 1862, folios 107-110; and, FO 17/387, Mercer to Duke of Newcastle, Hong Kong, October 2, 1862, folios 23-25.

and infantry instructors as well as some artillery was immediately despatched to Canton from Hong Kong. It would appear that Robertson and Lieutenant-Colonel Moody, the commanding officer at Hong Kong, did not have the specific approval of Bruce for this action, but acted in the context of Bruce's well known favourable position on giving military instruction to the Chinese. The project was well underway before Bruce gave his formal consent in November.¹²

Following the participation at Ningpo in May 1862 of British and French naval forces in the recovery of that city, a policy in regard to the suppression of Taipings similar to that at Shanghai was undertaken. Not only was direct assistance furnished in the recovery of nearby towns, but a scheme to create a force of disciplined Chinese was undertaken by the British naval force under Captain Roderick Dew.¹³ It would appear to have been even more independent of Bruce than the Canton project. In arrangement with local Chinese authorities, principally the Ningpo taotai, a Chinese force of 1,000 men was raised for the defense and re-conquest of the Ningpo area. Twelve Royal Marines were appointed as instructors and the force was provided with weapons and accoutrements from the British military stores. In the field, the force was under the command of a British officer named Cooke, who held his commission from the local taotai. The governor of Chekiang was quite hostile towards the force and continually demanded its dissolution. Ningpo was also the headquarters and point of origin of the larger Franco-Chinese force organized along similar lines and under similar circumstances.¹⁴

¹²FO 17/374, Bruce to Robertson, Peking, November 11, 1862, folios 311-312; and, Bruce to Russell, Peking, November 12, 1862, folios 307-309. The Foreign Office did not know of the Canton training project until December 11 (FO 17/387, Rogers to Hammond, Colonial Office, London, December 11, 1862, folio 21.) and registered its approval on January 5, 1863, (FO 17/399, Hammond to Colonial Office, Foreign Office, London, January 5, 1863, folio 17.).

¹³FO 17/402, Bosanguet to (Strode), Flamer at Ningpo, May 19, 1863, folios 273-275; and Wilson, The Ever-Victorious Army, p. 104.

¹⁴Prosper Giguel, "La France en Chine," Revue des Deux-Mondes, LI:34 Seconde Periode (June 15, 1864), 962-963. Giguel was founder of the Ningpo Franco-Chinese force. Also see Henri Cordier, Histoire des Relations de la Chine avec les Puissances Occidentales, (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1901; reprinted by Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1966), I, 215-217; and, "Prosper Marie Giguel," Encyclopedia Sinica, 207.

But at Shanghai, where Li's attitude to British training schemes was not entirely favourable, Hope and Staveley found themselves looking at Ward's Ever Victorious Army as the only likely solution to British involvement. In February, Hope and Michel had spoken highly of the force and considered it as having the potentialities of conducting a major part of the campaign. Now, with the failure of their own projects, there was renewed British interest in the force. For example, in a note to his replacement Rear Admiral Kuper, Hope recommended that Kuper not only continue to call upon the Chinese to allow the British to drill their forces, but also, in a more realistic and immediate sense, to keep in view:

The careful organization and increase of Ward's Chinese corps to . . . [10,000 men] . . . , with the view of rendering it adequate for the defence of the Shanghai and Ningpo districts, and the withdrawal of the foreign troops within a definite period.

 The abolition of all foreign contingents, the men being turned over to Ward's Chinese.¹⁵

On his return to London in January of 1863, Hope similarly informed the Foreign Office that because of the unhealthiness of Shanghai ". . . I should fear that their [British forces] continuing at Shanghai during the ensuing season will lead to further serious loss." The only solution would be to withdraw British troops ". . . at as early a period as may be consistent with its [Shanghai's] safety and its future protection by 'Ward's Chinese.'"¹⁶

This renewed interest in Ward's army was in general agreement with the directives received from the Foreign Office in the summer of

¹⁵FO 17/387, Extract from a Memorandum dated October 15, 1862, addressed to Rear-Admiral Kuper by Vice-Admiral Sir.J. Hope, on resigning the command of the Station, Printed for the use of the cabinet, January 20, 1863, folios 189-191.

¹⁶FO 17/399, Note on the immediate reduction and the eventual withdrawal of the Troops Employed in the North of China, Hope, January 31, 1863, folios 196-199.

1862.¹⁷ Although it was not directly suggested that the Ever Victorious Army replace the British presence at Shanghai, Bruce was instructed to sell military stores at cost price to Ward and to press on Kung the expediency of raising Ward's force to 10,000 equipped and trained men.

In September of 1862, an event occurred that completely altered the British relationship to the Ever Victorious Army. On September 21, 1862, in an attack on Tseki (near Ningpo), Ward was mortally wounded.¹⁸ Despite his propensity towards avarice, Ward was an exceedingly capable soldier. He had succeeded in organizing, maintaining and leading a most unusual force, as well as gaining in some measure the confidence and cooperation of both the British and Li Hung-chang.¹⁹ Now the British and Li were faced with the task of finding a man capable of replacing Ward. This had to be done quickly because of the very real danger of the force breaking up and drifting into banditry or the ranks of the Taipings.²⁰

The selection of a new commander was not a matter without complications. There were two possible choices from within the force - Edward Forester, the second in command, and Henry Andrea Burgevine, the chief of commissary. However, Forester, who was temporarily

¹⁷FO 17/368, Foreign Office to Bruce, Foreign Office, London, May 6, 1862, folios 184-187.

¹⁸Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion", CM, XXII:2 (November, 1896), 214-216.

¹⁹Li Hung-chang often wrote favourably of Ward. He willingly recognized Ward's abilities, energetic service and bravery. Also Li was astute enough to realize that Ward's favourable relationship with the British could be used to his advantage. Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, June 3, 1862 and September 8, 1862, pp. 95-96 and 103.

²⁰WO 107/5/Part 3, Hong Kong, September 30, 1862, no foliation. "General Ward was admirably suited to the work he had in hand, and it is to be feared that there will be very great difficulty in finding a successor to him, capable of controlling and commanding his contingent.

Overtures will no doubt be made to the men by the Rebels, and as the Mandarins have little or no power over them, . . . it is probable many will desert."

commanding the force, found his health so broken from a period of captivity among the Taipings that he could not consider a permanent command.²¹ This left only Burgevine, whose application was viewed in some quarters with more reluctance than enthusiasm.

Thoroughly confused, Li was in favour of the command being given to a Chinese, Wu Hsiao-fan. He wrote of this to Tsêng Kuo-fan:

I grieve to hear that Burgevine and Forester are competing with each other. However, His Excellency Hsüeh says both are untrustworthy. As the British Consul and Admiral wish to dispatch an officer to take command, the two Taotais Wu (Hsiao-fan) and Yang (Fang) will hereby resign their responsibilities, but secretly retain their influence. Yet they also advocate taking over the command of the Force, and appointing some important officer to lead it. Nevertheless, as the chiefs of these four thousand men are all foreigners, how could a Chinese officer control them? If they are handed over to a British commander, they will become unmanageable and the towns of Sung-chiang will again be lost. I, Hung-chang, have considered the matter four times and decided to put the Taotai Wu in charge. If he should employ some foreigners to assist him, let him do so at his discretion. As foreigners could not be dealt with according to our laws, how could Chinese do business with them?²²

Staveley and Medhurst had quite different plans for the selection of a commander of the Ever Victorious Army. On September 25, Staveley wrote a detailed outline of his proposal to Bruce.

. . . I have made an offer to the Viceroy to place a British officer in command of the so-called "Ward's force" subject to your approval of the same. I was induced to take this step as I consider: 1st. That this force will never be what it ought to be, until it is officered and commanded by English officers. 2nd. That so long as it remains in the hands of an adventurer no officer of respectability would accept an appointment in it. 3rd. Because such an opportunity of placing a British officer at its head would not be likely to occur again. 4th. That there would be danger of men going over to

²¹Forester, "Personal Recollections of the Tai-Ping Rebellion", CM, XXII:2, 216.

²²Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, October 1, 1862, p. 104.

the rebels if the force was allowed to dissolve.²³

However, Staveley's proposal entailed a participation that could not be allowed under the restrictions, such as the Bonham Neutrality Ordinance (1854), still considered to be in effect. As Bruce pointed out to Staveley, the British government had approved of the training projects and the assistance rendered in defending the treaty ports,

But as yet they have not gone further, and it is uncertain whether they would approve of an officer in the British service commanding Chinese troops in the Imperial Service, to be employed for instance against Soo-chow and Nanking or any point beyond the radius of 30 miles around Shanghai or Ning-po.²⁴

Bruce was even more specific about the objections to putting the force under a British officer after he received information on the decisions surrounding the Lay-Osborn fleet.²⁵ He wrote Staveley:

Since I wrote my letter of the 11th instant, on the appointment of a successor to General Ward, the mail of the 10th August from England has arrived.

I am convinced by what has passed on the subject of Captain Sherard Osborn, in my objections to putting Ward's corps under a British officer without the express permission of Her Majesty's Government, unless they are put under him solely for the purpose of instruction, he having nothing to do with leading them in the field; for if he commands them, he must enter into the Imperial service, and Earl Russell has distinctly stated that he must have the Queen's license before he can do so. I think it, therefore, desirable that the successor should be taken from among the officers

²³FO 17/374, Staveley to Bruce, Headquarters, Shanghai, September 25, 1862, folios 174-175. Actually Staveley's proposal received the approval of the Foreign Office and the War Office, but by the time the approval arrived in China events had progressed to the point of Gordon's tentative appointment to the command of the force. See FO 17/387, Lugard to Hammond, War Office, London, December 11, 1862, folios 27-28; FO 17/387, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, December 17, 1862, folio 83; and FO 17/369, Foreign Office to Bruce, Foreign Office, London, December 29, 1862, folio 224.

²⁴FO 17/374, Bruce to Staveley, Peking, October 11, 1862, folios 176-177.

²⁵BPP, 1862, Vol. LXIII, Cmnd. 2221, "China: Correspondence Respecting the Employment under the Government of China of Officers in the Naval or Military Service of Her Majesty."

of the corps.²⁶

Bruce's opinions on the subject did not reach Shanghai until after the selection of commander had been made. It was Hope, just returned from Japan, who effectively blocked Staveley's attempt to put the force under a British officer. Hope was inclined to keep the force on its present footing. He supported Burgevine as Ward's successor because there was no indication from the British or Chinese governments that any other action was warranted or would be countenanced.²⁷ As to Staveley's arguments, he dismissed them as speculation:

It has been urged that so long as it remains under[the] command of an adventurer that men of respectability and military experience cannot be obtained to serve in it as officers. This I believe will not prove to be the case, the high pay and prospect of active service being inducements quite sufficient to procure the services of good men if pains are taken to obtain them.²⁸

However, Hope's support of Burgevine was with several restrictions and qualifications. By no means did he want a completely permanent or unalterable appointment for Burgevine. Despite the above comment to Paget, Hope felt that

There is no doubt that the efficiency of this corps . . . would be more than doubled if it were commanded by an English officer of high military reputation and some rank aided by a body of officers, commissioned and non-commissioned the service of these foreign officers should be limited to a stated number of years during which time Chinese officers should be trained to replace them as such a feature of the system would not only tend to the great object of making the Chinese Government self dependent but also would tend to disarm the jealousy of both Chinese and foreigners.²⁹

²⁶FO 17/374, Bruce to Staveley, Peking, October 14, 1862, folio 179.

²⁷FO 17/387, Hope to Paget, Imperieuse at Wu-sung, October 18, 1862, folios 167-168; FO 17/387, Hope to Bruce, Coromandel at Shanghai, October 8, 1862, folios 169-173; and, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Admiralty 125, China: Correspondence, the Rebel Question, Volume 105 (Hereinafter referred to as ADM 125/105.) Hope to Forester, Coromandel at Ningpo, October 12, 1862, folios 81-83.

²⁸FO 17/387, Hope to Paget, Imperieuse at Wu-sung, October 18, 1862, folios 167-168.

²⁹FO 17/387, Hope to Bruce, Coromandel at Shanghai, October 8, 1862, folios 169-173.

But Hope felt that any attempt on the part of Britain to undertake such action would be met by the desire of the French, and possibly that of other treaty powers, to introduce a proportionate number of officers into the force and the command itself might become a subject of contention. This could be to the detriment of the force. Further, the Chinese government would probably demand that all officers submit themselves completely to Chinese authority and perhaps even adopt Chinese nationality so as to be free from foreign influence. Hope felt that this might also create a difficulty in the employment of British officers.

Therefore, in view of the fact that immediate action was required and that the disintegration of the force must be prevented, Hope was of the opinion that upon the whole the command of the force had better continue in the hands of Burgevine.

I therefore recommend that Colonel Burgevine should have a fair trial in command of the Corps for which ample time will be afforded by that required for reference to H.M. Government; [and] that you sanction a temporary arrangement being made by the Brigadier General [Staveley] for the command of Corps should circumstances render it requisite and that every countenance and assistance by the British Authorities ordered in Colonel Ward's case should be continued to him.³⁰

The Ever Victorious Army under Burgevine

In early October, Hope, Staveley and Li agreed to give Burgevine a "fair trial" as commander of the force. This decision was made before Hope or Staveley had received replies from Bruce on their proposals for the force. However, the decision eventually received the approval of Bruce and of the British government.³¹ Li reluctantly gave his approval, but his reasons for doing so are not made clear.³²

³⁰FO 17/387, Hope to Bruce, Coromandel at Shanghai, October 8, 1862, folios 169-173.

³¹FO 17/374, Bruce to Russell, Peking, November 10, 1862, folios 293-296; and, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office 228, Consular and Embassy Archives - China (Hereinafter referred to as FO 228.)/Volume 337, Hammond to Secretary to Admiralty (Paget), Foreign Office, London, January 5, 1863, no foliation.

³²Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, October 14, 1862, pp. 104-105.

Staveley, probably realizing that his proposal would require reference to Britain before any definite action could be taken and knowing that immediate action was necessary, had little choice but to accept Burgevine's appointment.

As Burgevine's appointment was contingent on his fitness for the post this allowed for the eventual appointment of a British officer as commander. Even before Burgevine's appointment was ratified by Li, Staveley was making it known that he would be prepared to supply an officer for the purpose of replacing Burgevine, should that from any contingency be requisite.³³ Li expressed himself in an interview in October as being in agreement with this arrangement.³⁴

At the time of Burgevine's appointment, Hope had raised the possibility of actually placing a British officer with Burgevine to assume control in the event of Burgevine's death.³⁵ According to Li, it was finally decided that this would not be necessary.³⁶ But following the first engagement of the force under Burgevine at Chia-ting (Kahding) on October 24, Hope began to express doubts about the abilities of Burgevine and again raised the possibility of placing some British officers with the force.³⁷ They would serve not only for emergency leadership purposes, but also in more active roles. Hope felt that temporarily providing the force with British officers would strengthen Burgevine and ensure the continued existence of the force until something more permanent could be arranged.

In his instructions of October 29 to Captain John Yate Holland

³³FO 17/387, Hope to Bruce, Coromandel at Shanghai, October 8, 1862, folios 169-173.

³⁴FO 17/387, Staveley to Bruce, Headquarters, Shanghai, October 31, 1862, folios 231-232.

³⁵ADM 125/105, Hope to Paget, Imperieuse at Hong Kong, November 8, 1862, folios 255-256.

³⁶Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, October 14, 1862, pp. 104-105.

³⁷ADM 125/105, Hope to Paget, Imperieuse at Hong Kong, November 8, 1862, folios 255-256.

of the Royal Marines, the officer selected by Hope to be Burgevine's chief of staff, Hope was even more specific.

The object with which I have sanctioned your serving in this corps, is that I felt very strongly the necessity after Colonel Ward's death of giving some assistance to his successor in order to keep it together and to improve it until the decision of H.M. Government can be taken as to British officers being permitted to serve in it. It is no derogation to Colonel Burgevine that in ability for handling troops in the field, I have observed that he is very inferior to Colonel Ward, and will be much benefited by your experience.³⁸

Four officers and thirty-two non-commissioned officers and privates were loaned by Hope and Staveley to Burgevine.³⁹ The loan was well received by Burgevine, who readily recognized the limits of his officer corps. He gave no evidence of feeling that his command was being threatened by the participation of British officers. In fact, at about the same time, Burgevine presented his own request to Hope, which was to induce Elgin to supply the force with officers from the Indian service.⁴⁰

The officer loan arrangement immediately came into difficulties over the limits placed on the officers by Staveley, after Hope had left Shanghai for England. In early November, Li Hung-chang, in answer to Tsêng Kuo-fan's urgent request for assistance at Nanking, decided to dispatch immediately the Ever Victorious Army.⁴¹ Hearing

³⁸ADM 125/105, Hope to Holland, Imperieuse at Wu-sung, October 29, 1862, folios 269-275.

³⁹FO 228/337, Staveley to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, November 6, 1862, no folios; and, WO 107/5/Part 3, November 4, 1862, Hong Kong, no foliation.

⁴⁰ADM 125/105, Burgevine to Hope, Shanghai, October 28, 1862, folio 261. Hope attempted to obtain sixteen such officers to fill positions as regimental commanders, second-in-commanders, adjutants and quartermasters. They would serve from one to three years. See ADM 125/105, Memorandum of the conditions under which Officers are to serve in Ward's Corps, folio 267. However, upon discovering the request, Li Hung-chang opposed it as he felt that the force was already over-officered. FO 228/347, Medhurst to Bruce, Shanghai, January 31, 1863, folios 81-82.

⁴¹Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, November 3, 1862, p. 106. The sending of the Ever Victorious Army to Nanking had been under discussion for some time. Shortly before his death, Ward had urged Li to send him to Nanking, promising to recover the city within nine days "without fail". See ibid., Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, August 4, 1862, p. 101. Also see Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan, p. 260.

of this, Staveley informed Burgevine that he could not use the British officers, even those who had volunteered for full-time service, in combat beyond the thirty-mile radius.⁴² Beyond the thirty-mile radius their roles were limited to drill, administrative and organizational duties. This came as a complete surprise to Burgevine, who claimed to have accepted them under the impression that they could be used in the field beyond the thirty-mile radius.⁴³ He protested to Staveley explaining that not only would the withdrawal of the British officers at time of battle be hard on morale, but that their leadership was most urgently required by the force. Staveley was most adamant and Burgevine felt no recourse but to refuse to accept the officers under these conditions.⁴⁴ He explained the situation to Hope:

To this [restriction] as a matter of course I could not agree. I meant to replace the "roughs" I have at present by these English officers, but if they were to be recalled at the moment when their services would be most required it is clear that I would be in a worse position than if I had never had them. . . .⁴⁵

However, about a week later, Burgevine had a change of mind and agreed to accept the officers under any conditions dictated.⁴⁶ They were immediately dispatched by Staveley, but with a further condition to their services. Staveley claimed that none of the officers, all of whom had originally volunteered for this service, were now willing to serve under the orders of Burgevine. Therefore, Staveley was placing the whole party of British officers under the command of Captain Stack, 67th Regiment, who would act as a liaison between them and Burgevine.

⁴²FO 17/375, Staveley to Bruce, Headquarters, Shanghai, November 5, 1862, folios 104-105.

⁴³British Museum Manuscript (Hereinafter referred to as BM.) 52386, Burgevine to Staveley, Shanghai, November 3, 1862, folio 1; and, BM 52386, Burgevine to Hope, Shanghai, November 6, 1862, folios 2-3.

⁴⁴BM 52386, Burgevine to Staveley, Shanghai, November 5, 1862, folio 2.

⁴⁵BM 52386, Burgevine to Hope, Shanghai, November 6, 1862, folios 2-3.

⁴⁶FO 17/375, Staveley to Bruce, Headquarters, Shanghai, November 11, 1862, folios 111-113; and, FO 17/399, Staveley to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, November 21, 1862, folios 97-100.

Staveley was acting within the established limits by not allowing British officers to participate in military action beyond the thirty-mile radius. Even with the involvement in the civil war sanctioned the Lay-Osborn fleet, which would be known of in Shanghai by this time, such activity would require prior permission from the British government.⁴⁷ Also, the removal of the Ever Victorious Army to Nanking was not advantageous to the security of Shanghai. A few weeks previous to this affair, Hope had pointed out that:

The capture of Nanking, although it will without doubt prove a great blow to the rebels, is likely to lead to Soochow becoming the chief seat of their Government, and increased pressure from thence on Shanghae.

The employment of Ward's Chinese in the capture of Nanking should, therefore, be discouraged as withdrawing it from its more legitimate object - the protection of Shanghae; but when in sufficient force to do so, there will be no objection to its operating towards Soochow, and driving the rebels back in that direction . . . , and its commander and the authorities of Shanghae should be distinctly reminded, when necessary, that the understanding that it would be employed, as above described originally procured it our support, and that it should, therefore be adhered to.⁴⁸

Staveley may have felt that the restrictions on the officers would seriously affect the effectiveness of the force at Nanking and perhaps

⁴⁷When Staveley informed Bruce of this affair, Bruce supported him to Russell, saying: "I do not consider myself authorized to waive that condition [of no active service beyond thirty-mile radius], with respect to officers in Her Majesty's Service; nor can they enter into the Service of China without Her Majesty's Permission." FO 17/375, Bruce to Russell, Peking, November 25, 1862, folios 95-99. The Foreign Office agreed to the loan of officers on the understanding that they could only serve within the thirty-mile radius. FO 17/399, Foreign Office to Admiralty, Foreign Office, London, January 9, 1863, folio 43.

⁴⁸FO 17/387, Extract from a Memorandum dated October 15, 1862, addressed to Rear-Admiral Kuper by Vice Admiral Sir J. Hope, on resigning the Command of the Station, Printed for the use of the cabinet, January 20, 1863, folios 189-191. Also see FO 17/375, Bruce to Russell, Peking, December 11, 1862, folios 219-234. Although by no means sanctioning the involvement of British personnel, Bruce felt that the Ever Victorious Army would be best employed at such places as Nanking and Soochow ". . . which are bases of the Taipings operations and from which they must be dislodged if Shanghae and the river ports are to enjoy immunity from attack." Staveley eventually agreed to the force (without British officers) going to the relief of Tsêng Kuo-fan. See FO 17/399, Staveley to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, December 6, 1862, folios 250-251.

even dissuade Burgevine from removing the force to Nanking.⁴⁹

One further point that should be kept in mind regarding Staveley's action is his continuing interest in having a British officer placed in command of the force.⁵⁰ By restricting the British officers, Staveley, consciously or unconsciously, was undermining Burgevine's position as commander of the force by contributing to the growing difficulties between Burgevine and Li Hung-chang. Li became increasingly angered with Burgevine over his reluctance, due in part to the officer problem, to take his force to Nanking.⁵¹ Burgevine's continual procrastination was to Li a source of embarrassment, as he had already promised the force to Tsêng, and a source of expense, as he had paid in advance 100,000 ounces of silver for the force's transportation costs to Nanking.

Li had several other complaints against Burgevine and the Ever Victorious Army, all of which seemed to reach a climax in December of 1862. He found Burgevine an extremely difficult man with whom to work, ". . . full of intrigues and stubborn. . . [and] . . . not so easy going as Ward."⁵² He found the force under Burgevine far more

⁴⁹It appears to have been common knowledge that without British officers Burgevine's force would be of little use at Nanking. See Thomas Lyster, With Gordon in China, Letters from Thomas Lyster, Lieutenant Royal Engineers (Hereinafter referred to as With Gordon in China), edited by E.A. Lyster (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1891), p. 114.

⁵⁰FO 17/399, Staveley to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, November 21, 1862, folios 97-100.

⁵¹For example, see Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, November 11, 1862 and December 12, 1862, p. 107.

⁵²Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, November 11, 1862 and December 12, 1862, p. 107. Charles Gordon, in D.C. Boulger, The Life of Gordon (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), I, 57 is quoted as describing Burgevine as follows:

"He was a man of large promises and few works. His popularity was among a certain class. He was extravagant in his generosity, and as long as he had anything would divide it with his so-called friends, but never was a man of any administrative or military talent, and latterly, through the irritation caused by his unhealed wound and other causes, he was subject to violent paroxysms of anger, which rendered precarious the safety of any man who tendered to him advice that might be distasteful. He was extremely sensitive of his dignity."

idle than it had been under Ward, as it now spent its time ". . . sitting in idleness at Sung-chiang wasting money."⁵³ Li was determined to institute changes in regard to the force when, and if, the force ever completed its Nanking assignment. According to Andrew Wilson, Li had a variety of other complaints:

He also complained much of the enormous expenses of the force both under Ward and Burgevine; of the interference by the latter with the civil government of Sungkiang; of disputes between the disciplined Chinese and the Imperial troops; of the way in which the former plundered the people of the country, and in general of Burgevine's independent insulting demeanour.⁵⁴

Meanwhile Burgevine was repeatedly postponing the departure of his force to Nanking. By December, he had developed the excuse that he would not move his force until their arrears in pay for November were met. Taki, who still controlled the pay arrangement for the force, refused payment until Burgevine had set the date for the force's departure.⁵⁵ But Burgevine failed to fix a definite date for departure and, in fact, asserted his unwillingness to go to Nanking. Actually by late December Burgevine's continued delay had carried him past the crisis at Nanking and his force was no longer required.⁵⁶ But the force's arrears in pay had still not been met by January 3, 1863.

On January 3, the Ever Victorious Army mutinied at Sung-chiang because of the arrears in pay. According to Li Hung-chang, Burgevine personally led the force in this forceful demonstration and it was only through the persuasion of Li Hêng-sung, a Chinese officer in the force, that Burgevine ended the demonstration before any serious damage was committed.⁵⁷

⁵³By late 1862, the thirty-mile radius at Shanghai was largely clear of rebels. Therefore any action by the force would have to be beyond the radius and the restrictions on the British officers could have made Burgevine reluctant to take to the field.

⁵⁴Wilson, The Ever Victorious Army, p. 92.

⁵⁵Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, January 7, 1863, pp. 108-109.

⁵⁶Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan, p. 262.

⁵⁷Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, January 6, 1863, p. 108.

The next day, Burgevine proceeded to Shanghai with a small armed force to extract the money forcibly. Li Hung-chang described the affair in a memorial to the throne:

On the 15th day [January 4] between 9 - 11 a.m., he [Burgevine] brought several dozen of his musketeers quickly to Yang Fang's [Taki's] residence in Shanghai; Yang Fang was wounded on the nose, forehead and chest until he vomited a great deal of blood, and more than forty thousand silver dollars were forcibly carried off.⁵⁸

This drastic action by Burgevine allowed Li Hung-chang an opportunity to relieve Burgevine of his command. Li immediately issued the following proclamation:

The Chinese authorities hereby give notice that Burgevine, having been guilty of treason in refusing to obey instructions, striking a mandarin, and robbing the treasury of public money, has been degraded by his Excellency, the Foo-tai, and removed from his post of Commandant of the Ever-Victorious Army. Burgevine's command ceased on the 4th of January, 1863.⁵⁹

Li wanted to replace more than just Burgevine.⁶⁰ As a newly appointed governor, he had to rebuild the bureaucracy of Kiangsu, and specifically that of Shanghai. Part of Li's programme was to displace the old bureaucracy of the province, especially the wealth and power of Wu Hsu and Taki, who controlled the Ever Victorious Army. He could not displace them immediately but had to familiarize himself with their work and then wait for an opportunity giving reason to dismiss them. Li also required their experience in the first months of his governorship in his relations with foreigners at Shanghai. By the last months of 1862, Li was ready to move against them. He made Wu Hsu directly responsible for the force going to Nanking. His inability to make the Ever Victorious Army move as ordered placed him in a position of failing to carry out orders and Li denounced him openly for this failing. The force refused to move because of pay

⁵⁸Ibid., Memorial from Li Hung-chang, January 7, 1863, pp. 108-109.

⁵⁹As cited in Samuel Mossman, General Gordon's Private Diary of his Exploits in China (Hereinafter referred to as Gordon's Private Diary.) (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1885), p. 117.

⁶⁰Spector, Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army, pp. 51-60.

difficulties created by Li. Li had increased the share of financial obligations for Wu Hsu and Taki and to pay the force's wages would have meant using their private funds. Naturally, Taki delayed and this led to the fracas on January 3, 1863. Li now had reason not only to dismiss Burgevine but also Taki.

The Appointment of a British Commander to the Force

Li immediately approached Staveley with a request for a British officer to take over the command of the force.⁶¹ Staveley readily agreed to supply an officer.⁶² Li seems to have feared that the force under its foreign officers might become difficult to control. He could not simply disband the force without vociferous opposition from the British. Further, it would be a move wrought with potential danger to suddenly release this large group of mercenaries. Li felt that if they were brought under the joint control of Britain and China, the "dread of the might of England" might subdue the "foreign rascals" in the force.⁶³

The selection of an officer was done with much secrecy to prevent undue excitement among the officers and men of the Ever Victorious Army, who wanted to reinstate Burgevine or appoint Forester to the command.⁶⁴ Agreement between Li and Staveley on Burgevine's successor seems to have been reached on January 4.⁶⁵ The force was to be placed under joint British-Chinese control. Li Hêng-sung was Li's

⁶¹Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, January 6, 1863, p. 108.

⁶²FO 17/400, Staveley to Military Secretary at Horse Guards, Headquarters, Shanghai, January 8, 1863, folios 116-118.

⁶³Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, January 6, 1863, p. 108.

⁶⁴BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, Cmd. 3295, "Papers Relating to the Affairs of China," Statement of the Officers belonging to the Disciplined Chinese Force, Sung-chiang, January 10, 1863, p. 130. This statement was signed by about fifty officers wanting Burgevine reinstated as commander.

⁶⁵ADM 125/105, Holland to Kuper, Shanghai, April 9, 1863, folios 297-301. Also see Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, January 6, 1863, p. 108.

choice as the Chinese co-commander.⁶⁶ Holland, in his capacity as chief of staff for the Ever Victorious Army, would act as the temporary British commander, but was restricted to operations within the thirty mile radius. Charles Gordon was recommended by Staveley to Bruce in Peking and to the War Office as the choice for permanent British commander.⁶⁷

Holland did not want to enter the Chinese service as permanent commander of the force.⁶⁸ He found the force mutinous and saw little future in it. Even if he had changed his mind about serving permanently, his chances of being accepted were negligible after the disastrous defeat of the force while under his command on February 14, 1863 at T'ai-ts'ang.⁶⁹ Holland completely lost the confidence of everyone concerned.

⁶⁶Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, January 6, 1863, p. 108.

⁶⁷FO 17/400, Staveley to Military Secretary at Horse Guards, Headquarters, Shanghai, January 8, 1863, folios 116-118.

⁶⁸ADM 125/105, Holland to Kuper, Shanghai, April 9, 1863, folios 297-301.

⁶⁹Although T'ai-ts'ang was beyond the thirty mile radius, Holland was pressured by Li to attack it. Li, tired of the continuing inactivity of the force, was threatening to reduce or disband it altogether. Holland was allowed by Staveley to lead the force at T'ai-ts'ang ". . . at his own risk of the consequence." The attack was a complete disaster for the Ever Victorious Army. 450 men were killed, wounded, or missing, as well as twenty European officer casualties. Two thirty-two pound siege guns had to be abandoned unspiked to the Taipings. According to Samuel Mossman, the serious losses were due to foolish errors on the part of Holland:

" . . . the oversight of not providing the storming party with the necessary means of crossing ditches both wet and dry, which invariably form the outer defences of Chinese cities beyond the walls. Moreover a severe loss in killed and wounded had been caused by the unskilful manner of the posting the heavy seige guns in the open, without any cover for the artillerymen, who were shot in number while serving them."

Mossman, Gordon's Private Diary, p. 143.

Also see ADM 125/105, Borlase to Kuper, Pearl at Shanghai, February 20, 1863, folios 323-325.

There appear to be several reasons as to why Gordon was not immediately placed in command of the Ever Victorious Army, pending the approval of the appropriate British and Chinese authorities. According to Gordon, he was unwilling to supersede Holland until Bruce had given his decision on the advisability of a British officer taking any part in the matter.⁷⁰ According to Boulger, the delay was due to the necessity of having to obtain the permission of the home government for the appointment and also because Gordon had not finished his assignment of mapping the area within Shanghai's thirty mile radius.⁷¹

The selection of Gordon by Staveley would seem to have been a rather poor choice.⁷² Gordon was an officer in the engineers with little combat experience. He had no experience in training or leading troops, especially Chinese troops. He had served in the Crimea, but as a lieutenant in the engineers concerned only with engineering tasks. He had been in China since late 1860, but again in the role of an engineer. However, he did participate as an engineer in several of the British expeditions within the thirty mile radius at Shanghai. Gordon also had an excellent understanding of the topography of the country within the thirty mile radius, as he had charge of its surveying and mapping. He claimed to have been ". . . in every town and village within the thirty mile radius." But, one must keep in mind that the radius was now virtually clear of rebels and this knowledge would not be of as extreme value as it would have been earlier. The factor that probably recommended Gordon to Staveley more than any other was his family connexions. Gordon's brother, H.W. Gordon, also an officer in the British army, had married in 1851 the sister of Staveley.⁷³

⁷⁰Charles Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China by Himself, (Hereinafter referred to as Gordon's Campaign in China), introduction by Colonel R.H. Vetch (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1900), p. 32.

⁷¹Boulger, The Life of Gordon, I, 54.

⁷²For information on Gordon's activities before his appointment to the Ever Victorious Army see: D.C. Boulger, ed., General Gordon's Letters from the Crimea, the Danube, and Armenia - August 18, 1854 to November 17, 1858 (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1884); and, Boulger, The Life of Gordon, Vol. I.

⁷³"Sir Henry William Gordon," Dictionary of National Biography, 1908, VIII, 204.

According to Boulger, H.W. Gordon had been hinting to his brother as far back as May 1861 that he could do something for him.⁷⁴ The command of the force offered this unknown officer in the engineers an opportunity to build a reputation for himself.

One further point about the dismissal of Burgevine and his replacement by Gordon is the extent to which Staveley and Gordon were involved in Li's plot to dismiss Burgevine. As has been shown, Staveley had long been an advocate of a British commander for the force and had not been overly cooperative with Burgevine. Also, he had been in constant communication with Li about placing a British officer in command if the position became vacant. But the strongest evidence for some manner of complicity is the date of an application from Gordon for permission from the British government to accept service under the Chinese government.⁷⁵ The application is dated December 25, 1862, over a week before Burgevine's dismissal.

In late February, Staveley received two notices from Britain that strengthened his support of Gordon. The first was permission from the War Office to appoint a British officer to the command of the Ever Victorious Army.⁷⁶ This was approval for Staveley's original request of late September, not specifically for Gordon's appointment. Staveley also received the Order in Council of January 9, 1863, wherein permission was given to British military and naval officers to accept service under the Chinese government without making this dependent on recruitment by Lay or Osborn. Staveley stated his intention to place Gordon immediately in command of the force.

However, Bruce also received the Foreign Office approval of

⁷⁴Boulger, The Life of Gordon, I, 60.

⁷⁵FO 17/400, Gordon to D.A.A. General (F. Jebb at Shanghai), Shanghai, December 25, 1862, folio 119. This application was included with FO 17/400, Staveley to Military Secretary at the Horse Guards, Headquarters, Shanghai, January 8, 1863, folios 116-118, with the comment ". . . he is an officer of first rate ability and energy and quite equal to any position in which he might be placed."

⁷⁶FO 17/417, Staveley to Earl de Grey and Ripon, Headquarters, Hong Kong, February 28, 1863, folio 189.

Staveley's original proposal.⁷⁷ He had been withholding approval for Staveley's request for the appointment of Gordon. He had little choice now but to forward his approval, as well as that of Prince Kung, to Shanghai, which resulted in the following notification:

The Prince Kung and Sir Frederick Bruce having approved of the appointment of Major Gordon, Royal Engineers, to the command of the Ward Force, Major Gordon will take over charge from Captain Holland from this date. By order, F. Jebb, D.A.A. General. Headquarters, Shanghai, March 24th, 1863.⁷⁸

In addition to the appointment of a British officer to the command of the force, Staveley and Li brought about other desired changes in the Ever Victorious Army. The new arrangements were contained in sixteen articles, upon which agreement was reached by Li and Staveley on January 28, 1863.⁷⁹ Most of the provisions were to Li's advantage and designed to increase his control over the force. As has already been indicated, a joint Chinese commander was appointed, for the purposes of liaison between Gordon and Li.⁸⁰ Other Chinese officers were appointed by Li to administrative positions in the force for the purpose of supervising financial and disciplinary matters. No purchases of any manner of military stores could be made without Li's permission. The expensive coolie train serving with the force was reduced and a ceiling placed on its numbers to prevent unauthorized growth. Hospital expenses were reduced and its expenses placed on the

⁷⁷Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings, fn. 51, p. 236.

⁷⁸As cited in Mossman, Gordon's Private Diary, p. 154.

⁷⁹The sixteen articles can be found in a variety of sources. An abbreviated version can be found in Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, January 14, 1862 and January 28, 1863; and Memorial from Li Hung-chang, January 28, 1863, p. 109. For the full text see Wilson, The Ever-Victorious Army, pp. 388-389; FO 228/347, folios 26-27; or, BM 52389, folios 8-12. It has been transcribed in full in Appendix I of this thesis.

⁸⁰The joint Chinese commander from January 1863 to the dissolution of the force was Li Hêng-sung (also known as Li Ai-dong, Li Adong, Li A-tang, etc. in nineteenth-century sources). It is difficult to locate biographical information on Li Hêng-sung. He had been in the Shanghai area fighting the Taipings since at least mid-1860 and had varying degrees of contact with the Ever Victorious Army up to the time of his appointment. Li Hêng-sung and Gordon appear to have been able to act as co-commanders without too much friction. This was probably

same footing as other Chinese forces. The system of extra allowances for the foreign officers was abolished. The force itself was to be limited to 3,000 men with provision for further reduction if the custom revenues could not support this number. The commander of the force was forbidden to interfere with the civil jurisdiction of Sung-chiang, including the undertaking of public works without the consent of the civil authorities of Sung-chiang. Of prime importance, was that the Ever Victorious Army would be allowed to serve beyond the thirty mile radius.⁸¹ Also, Gordon was to be considered as a Chinese officer and to serve under Li's orders.

Staveley's prime concern was to negotiate a secure position for Gordon and to prevent a reoccurrence of what befell Burgevine. More secure arrangements for the pay of the force were promised by Li. Gordon could not be dismissed by the Chinese without due notice and a judicial inquiry in which the British consul at Shanghai would take part. Gordon could not even quit of his own volition without the consent of the British commander-in-chief in China. This would obstruct the use of pressure to force Gordon's resignation. In addition, no foreign officer could be appointed or dismissed except through a procedure that required the concurrence of the British.

Staveley's plans for increased British involvement in the Ever Victorious Army did not stop with the appointment of a British officer to the command of the force.⁸² He wanted to increase the force

(Footnote 80 continued) due to Li Hêng-sung confining himself in the main to writing dispatches to Li Hung-chang and not interfering to any great degree in matters of Gordon's prerogative. References to Li Hêng-sung can be found in BM 52393, Memo on the Composition of the Disciplined Chinese known as the Ever-Victorious Army, Ward's force and Quinsan Force, folio 29; and, Cheng, Chinese Sources, pp. 105, 108, 127, 136-137.

⁸¹FO 17/400, Staveley to Military Secretary of Horse Guards, Headquarters, Shanghai, January 8, 1863, folios 116-118. Staveley noted that for the Chinese to accept a British commander and British involvement in the force, the British must be willing to allow the force to go beyond the thirty mile radius.

⁸²FO 17/402, Memo from Staveley, folios 79-81; FO 17/402, Memo from Staveley to War Office, folio 190; FO 17/402, Staveley to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, April 14, 1863, folios 273-274; and, FO 17/402, Staveley to Tan-quo-Fan (Tsêng Kuo-fan), Headquarters, Shanghai, April 1863, folios 275-277.

to, or perhaps more accurately put, to replace it with, a force of over 10,000 men, officered and led by British officers. In theory, an attempt would be made to replace these officers with properly trained Chinese officers. The force would be organized into 8,400 infantry, 840 cavalry and 840 artillery. The purpose of the force would be to assist more fully than before in defeating the rebellion. The most important change advocated by Staveley was to eliminate the control of the force by Li Hung-chang and to replace him with British and higher placed Chinese officials. The force would be under the joint command of Tsêng Kuo-fan and Prince Kung, with Bruce having special powers of control and arbitration. The arrangements for the force's pay, discipline and organization would be done in concert with Prince Kung, not Li Hung-chang. For the British field commander of the force, Staveley recommended himself or Charles Gordon. The fact that he was considering the command for himself lends itself to an explanation of egotism for the reason as to why he should want to eliminate Li's control of the force. A soldier of Staveley's rank and reputation would not want to serve under a provincial official if he could possibly serve directly under higher placed officials. Also, from the tenor of the letters on this plan, Staveley seems to indicate that the proposed changes would lead to a more generous and stable financial arrangement for the force. A reason for the increased British involvement in the force would appear to be to prevent its sudden disbanding by Li in one of his recalcitrant moods. Staveley's proposal elicited a fair amount of interest at the Foreign Office and the War Office in London. However, the financial arrangement for the force, which was to be achieved by placing a charge against the Chinese customs, caused the Treasury Office to oppose the proposal. They seemed to feel that such an extensive involvement by Britain in the force would create an unwanted and unnecessary financial liability for Britain.

It would be necessary . . . to invite . . . the sanction of the House of Commons upon undertaking a liability for the pay of a body of Foreign Troops in a Foreign country, and in the opinion of my Lords, that sanction would be certainly and justly refused unless under circumstances of political necessity, and also with provisions for constitutional control, neither of which at all

appear in the present proposal.⁸³

The Foreign Office was inclined to follow the financial objections of the Treasury Office and in passing the matter on to Bruce, instructed him to be guided by these objections in any arrangements he might be making.⁸⁴ However, Bruce was completely opposed to Staveley's proposal.

My opinion is that proposals of this nature are neither practicable nor expedient. The Imperial Government cannot be persuaded to assume the direction of military operations in the provinces, and thus to relieve the provincial authorities from the responsibility of putting down insurrection, while, on the other hand, the provincial authorities will not accord to any foreign officer the position due to him. Their object is to use him as a fighting instrument, to degrade him in the eyes of the population by studied slights and, by raising troops under the command of adventurers with sufficient organization to be more than a match for the insurgents, to put themselves in a position to check one corps by means of the other, and finally when it suits them, to get rid of both. This is the course pursued by Li, Even if the Imperial Government were to consent to the formation of such a force, the opposition of local officials would render its formation impossible.⁸⁵

With Bruce's condemnation of the scheme nothing further was done to implement Staveley's proposal.

⁸³FO 17/401, Treasury Chambers to Hammond, May 14, 1863, folios 37-38.

⁸⁴FO 17/401, Foreign Office to War Office, May 22, 1863, folios 61-62.

⁸⁵FO 17/394, Bruce to Russell, Peking, October 29, 1863, folios 195-198.

CHAPTER IV

THE EVER VICTORIOUS ARMY UNDER CHARLES GORDON

Until the end of 1863, the Ever Victorious Army under the command of Gordon was extremely successful in the field.¹ Several major Taiping-held towns and positions were captured by the force on its own or in concert with imperial forces. The military achievements of Gordon and his force were climaxed with the surrender of Soochow in December of 1863, an occasion to which they had contributed much. But while stockades and towns fell to Gordon's Ever Victorious Army, the command of the force by Gordon was far from secure, and the purpose and limits of the force under Gordon were hotly debated. The causes of this fluid situation can be grouped under two broad but interdependent fronts - the struggle between Bruce and the British military establishment in China (now represented by General Brown) to define the role, limits and position of Gordon and the Ever Victorious Army; and the relationship between Li Hung-chang and Gordon and his force.

Initially, the relationship between Li Hung-chang and Charles Gordon was quite amicable. Li found himself not only satisfied but pleased with Gordon as commander of the force.² Gordon was cooperative, obedient and appeared capable of controlling and leading the force. On Li's orders, he had immediately taken the force beyond the thirty mile radius and successfully captured Fushan on April 4.³ This was just a little over a week after he assumed command of the force. The capture of Fushan caused the lifting of the seventy day old seige on Ch'ang-shu. This victory left Li absolutely convinced as to the value of Gordon.⁴ It was at Li's suggestion that Gordon was awarded for the victory at Fushan with an imperial commission as an officer

¹For details of the actions under Gordon see Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, pp. 33-79.

²Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, March 8, 1863 and April 3, 1863, p. 111.

³Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, pp. 34-35.

⁴Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorials from Li Hung-chang, April 12, 1863, pp. 111-112.

with the rank of tsung-ping (brigadier-general).⁵

Bruce's Attitude towards Gordon's Position

While Li was pleased with Gordon, Bruce was displeased with the appointment of a British officer to the command of the force. His opposition was not towards Gordon personally, but it was towards the British military's active and indiscriminate support of a force that was under regional control. In February 1863, Bruce had explained in general terms the inevitable futility of overriding Peking's authority on military matters in favour of purely local arrangements.

If an improved system can be adopted at the Ports, under the authority of the Chinese Government itself, there is some chance of its being extended to other parts of the country; - whereas, no permanent good will be done by our interfering arbitrarily with one Port and setting aside the authority of the Chinese Government. The moment the pressure is withdrawn, there will be a re-action in favour of the old abuses. At present, the object to be effected, is the substitution of an improved military and naval organization for the one hitherto used in China. I need not point out the impossibility of doing this suddenly.⁶

It is important to note that Bruce is still thinking of British involvement in the Chinese armed forces only in terms of training programmes.

By March, Bruce had come to realize the immediate need for major improvements in the Ever Victorious Army. In a report to London, he admitted his initial support for the continuation of Burgevine in the post, but he had come to realize that:

. . . the state of things, detailed in the report of Mr. Alabaster, on his visit to Sung-Kiang, the usurpation of civil authority there, . . . , their oppressive conduct towards the Chinese and the waste and extravagance of the corps in general, have in my opinion awakened very justly, the alarm of the Chinese Authorities, as to the dangers that may result from a large body of Chinese, disciplined and led by that class of Europeans to be found among the officers of that corps.

⁵Li Hung-chang to Gordon, May 16, 1863, as cited in author unknown, "Colonel Gordon's Chinese Force," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine CI:616 (February, 1867), 178.

⁶FO 17/390, Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 11, 1863, folios 103-106.

While, therefore, I am desirous of seeing General Burgevine's services properly acknowledged, I think the time is come for taking the force out of the hands of adventurers, and of placing it under officers whose position in the military service of their own country, is a guarantee both for the military knowledge and for their economical organization of the force. This is more particularly necessary in a force which is organized primarily with a view to the defense of Shanghai, for the foreign interests are large and tempting and the force which is to protect them ought to be one that can be thoroughly relied upon.⁷

In a letter of about the same date to Staveley, Bruce stated his desire to see the force officered by competent and reliable regulars from the armed forces of the smaller nations.⁸ He was not in favour of the officers being supplied from the armed forces of Britain or even the other "Great Treaty Powers". This was to avoid the problems of international jealousies. But at the same time, Bruce advised Staveley to concentrate on the more immediate problems of keeping the force together and improving its organization ". . . with a view to constitute an efficient garrison for Shanghai."

Clearly Bruce was not a willing supporter of increased British involvement of the nature that placed a British officer in command of the Ever Victorious Army. But under the circumstances he had to consent to Gordon's appointment because of the instructions from home, the need for immediate action and the lack of any suitable and ready alternative. But it is important to note that in giving his permission Bruce was undoubtedly thinking that the Ever Victorious Army would continue to serve in the immediate vicinity of Shanghai or

⁷FO 17/390, Bruce to Foreign Office, Peking, March 14, 1863, folios 241-242.

⁸FO 17/390, Bruce to Staveley, Peking, March 12, 1863, folios 246-249. In FO 17/374, Bruce to Russell, Peking, November 10, 1862, folios 293-296, Bruce commented on a conversation he had with Prince Kung on the question of military training.

"I recommended him to avoid jealousies, by engaging Prussian officers as instructors, and Mr. Hart has received instructions to apply to the Prussian Consul General, for that purpose.

Prussia, as representing the Zollverein and the states of Northern Germany, has a large trade, and has no navy, and her officers are less likely to mix in political questions in China than those of any other Treaty Power."

as the garrison of Shanghai itself.

However, within a few weeks of giving his permission, Bruce wanted Gordon to be replaced by Burgevine, who he now considered to be a suitable alternative. Burgevine had arrived in Peking and was actively pleading his case.⁹ Bruce found himself supporting Burgevine's plea for reinstatement to the command of the force. On April 2, Bruce wrote to Prince Kung, expressing his opinion that Burgevine had been unfairly treated and the two main points against him, the reluctance to go to Nanking and the Taki incident, had been incorrectly reported in Peking.¹⁰ Bruce gave his full recommendation to Kung for the reappointment of Burgevine. Similar letters were sent to Russell and Staveley.¹¹

According to his report to Russell, there were two main reasons why Bruce supported Burgevine in his attempt to regain command of the force.¹² First, he expressed a sincere belief in Burgevine's claim that he had been wrongly treated by the Chinese and was the victim of a conspiracy.¹³ He felt that Burgevine was quite competent for the position and had rendered adequate service. Further, if foreign officers in Chinese service, including British officers, were to have any security in their positions, then Bruce felt he must support Burgevine in obtaining justice.

The second reason had to do with the international jealousies which were continually being displayed among the powers in China.

⁹FO 228/347, Medhurst to Bruce, Shanghai, January 8, 1863, folios 1-8. When Burgevine was dismissed, the Chinese authorities wanted to arrest him, but their hesitation and the refusal of local British and probably American officials to assist in his arrest allowed Burgevine to escape from Shanghai.

¹⁰FO 17/391, Bruce to Kung, Peking, April 2, 1863, folios 58-62.

¹¹FO 17/391, Bruce to Russell, Peking, April 11, 1863, folios 52-57; FO 17/391, Bruce to Staveley, Peking, April 10, 1863, folios 64-66; and, FO 17/391, Bruce to Harvey, Peking, April 11, 1863, folios 68-69.

¹²FO 17/391, Bruce to Russell, Peking, April 11, 1863, folios 52-57.

¹³BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Papers Relating to the Affairs of China," Statement by General Burgevine, Shanghai, January 10, 1863, p. 129.

Burgevine had always had the full support of Anson Burlingame, the American minister, who had definite and not too friendly views on Britain's involvement in Chinese military affairs.¹⁴ Bruce was aware of this jealousy when he wrote of his reasons for supporting Burgevine.

. . . because it is proof, that will be appreciated, of my desire that such questions should be treated on broad principles, and that the policy of strengthening this government, so as to restore order in China, is not a mere pretext for obtaining an exclusive influence in important branches of the Chinese administration. I think, indeed, that in the uncertainty, as to whether this policy will succeed, it is better that English officers should not lead the Chinese troops against the Taepings, beyond the radius of thirty miles round Shanghae, as long as it can be avoided.¹⁵

Bruce was very careful to make it known that his support for Burgevine was no reflection on the abilities of Gordon. Quite early in the affair, he had Thomas Wade of the embassy inform Gordon of what was transpiring and of Bruce's position.

Sir Frederick (Bruce) hopes that you will understand . . . , and that you will not regard Burgevine's reinstallation as unfair to yourself, or allow it to weigh with you in your decision to seek service in China or other wise. There is room enough for everyone, and I should not hesitate, were I you, now that I have seen Burgevine, to take service under him as chief of the staff or in some corresponding position. . . . Sir Frederick has been actuated by a desire not so much to support Burgevine for his own sake (though he has formed a very favourable opinion of him) as to support the principle that a foreigner who does his duty by this government shall not be thrown over by it at a moment's notice,

¹⁴For example, Burlingame to Seward, Peking, October 27, 1863, as cited in Rantoul, "Frederick Townsend Ward," HCEI, XLIV:1, 55-56. Burlingame claimed to have been responsible for the appointment of Burgevine to the command of the force.

"After Ward's death, fearing that his force might dissolve and be lost to the cause of order, I hastened by express to inform the Chinese government of my desire that an American might be selected to fill his place, and was so fortunate, against considerable opposition, so as to secure the appointment of Colonel Burgevine.

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I felt that it was no more than fair that an American should command the foreign-trained Chinese on land, as the English, through Osborn, would command the same quality of force on sea."

¹⁵FO 17/391, Bruce to Russell, Peking, April 11, 1863, folios 52-57.

without sufficient cause shewn. Had he not been able to establish this he would have felt bound to discourage our people from entering this service. As of course they might any day be served in the same way.¹⁶

Gordon was extremely angered by this support for Burgevine and immediately replied to Wade stating his opinion that he was being most unfairly treated in the matter of his command.¹⁷ He unequivocally maintained that if dismissed he would not accept any other appointment with the Chinese or have ". . . any further doings with any Chinese forces."

Gordon was not alone for he had the complete support of Brown and Li Hung-chang. Brown felt that Gordon had done an excellent job as commander of the force and his removal, while perhaps justifiable on political grounds, was not sound on military grounds.

The Force is now arriving at a state of discipline most favourable, and if left (in my opinion) in the hand of a judicious Military Commander, and assisted by officers from H.M. Service, might become the nucleus for the formation of a larger Force, but of this I feel sure, that no good will be derived by the Chinese Government, if the Force is ever left entirely in the hands of a band of men, who have not the slightest military reputation and nothing whatever at stake.¹⁸

Brown stated that he would leave the affair entirely in the hands of Li, but would support him in retaining Gordon rather than counsel him to remove Gordon. Brown further intimated his intention of withholding assistance or cooperation to Burgevine should he regain control of the force.

Li also made known his refusal to give ever again the command of the force to Burgevine ". . . to increase vain expenses and suffer

¹⁶BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, Peking, April 10, 1863, folios 12-13.

¹⁷BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, Peking, May 11, 1863, folios 25-28. Unfortunately, Gordon's reply to Wade could not be located, but this letter is on the subject of the reply and contains many specific references and quotes from it.

¹⁸FO 17/402, Brown to Bruce, Shanghai, April 17, 1863, folios 8-9. Also see FO 17/402, Brown to Secretary of State for War, Shanghai, May 4, 1863, folios 6-7.

future difficulties."¹⁹ He assured both Brown and Gordon of his support for Gordon and ". . . to pay no attention to rumours, and relax in consequence," ²⁰ Li was especially pleased with Gordon's honest and frugal handling of the finances of the force, the main point on which he distrusted Burgevine. But, Li was also quick to state that he had no favourites and was by no means irrevocably tied to Gordon:

. . . I myself have no desire to show favor to one [foreigner], to the disadvantage of another, at one time severe, and at another lenient, and look merely to what is best for the Army, and least dangerous to the state, and as Gordon carried on his duties well I cannot displace him. Should he not do so hereafter I will then consider what is to be done.²¹

Burgevine returned to Shanghai in late April with an imperial commissioner sent by Prince Kung. Demanding Burgevine's reinstatement by Li to the command of the Ever Victorious Army, they met the solid opposition of Li, Brown and Gordon. Li described what happened in a letter to Tsêng Kuo-fan.

The Tsungli Yamen has sent a letter advising that Burgevine should again have command of the Ever Victorious Army. Although the British and American Ministers have acted as guarantors, how can China act in disregard of law? When Burgevine had returned from the Capital to Shanghai full of self-satisfaction, he requested me immediately to reappoint him. I flatly refused and gave the details to Prince Kung. As the Throne and the law should both be upheld, how can they be ambiguous and timid in determining the rights and wrongs? This is discouraging. Yet Gordon is the best character among the British officers, comparable with Roderick Dew in Ningpo. Even if he cannot get rid of the evil habits of the Ever-Victorious Army, these do not seem to be growing worse. The officials and people in Sung-chiang and Shanghai all praise the Army.²²

¹⁹FO 17/402, Li Hung-chang to Brown, translated by Alabaster, April 24, 1863, folios 11-16.

²⁰*Ibid.*, folios 11-16; and, BM 52386, Li Hung-chang to Gordon, April 24, 1863, folios 14-16.

²¹FO 17/402, Li to Brown, April 24, 1863, folios 11-16.

²²Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, April 27, 1863, pp. 112-113.

Burgevine returned once more to Peking to press his case, but without success.²³ In the face of Li's opposition and the favourable reports on Gordon, Peking was not prepared to entertain any further his demands for reappointment. In London, the general tone of the correspondence between the War Office and the Foreign Office indicates their support of Gordon in this affair.²⁴

But Bruce's opposition to a British officer leading the force was not dispelled by the failure to reinstate Burgevine. By this time Bruce had become aware that Gordon was leading the force in combat beyond the thirty mile radius and it was obvious that this would become his regular area of operations. Bruce was completely opposed to British officers serving with Chinese forces against the Taipings in campaigns beyond the thirty mile radius. His reason for this opposition was not now so much out of consideration for the neutrality of Britain in the rebellion, but arose from his difficulties with the Chinese over the operation of the British treaties and trade agreements with China. He explained the problem to Russell:

If the capture of one or two strongholds were likely to prove a deathblow to insurrection, and if on the other hand, the government showed a desire to be guided by our advice, in its general policy, it might be advisable to allow this system of cooperation, however faulty to continue. But the government shows no disposition rather to connive at infraction of treaty rights than to incur unpopularity with local authorities in enforcing them, and while on the one hand Governor Li's scheme tends to embroil us with the Taepings, I cannot take upon myself to say that it holds out the prospect of permanently restoring tranquility to China. Indeed, assistance in this form tends to weaken my hopes of obtaining redress from this government, for it is thus led to believe that we attach importance to the employment of our officers and that under all circumstances we are determined to make common cause with the Imperial Government.

²³BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, Peking, May 21, 1863, folios 31-36.

²⁴FO 17/401, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, June 23, 1863, folios 297; FO 17/402, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, July 6, 1863, folio 46; FO 17/403, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, September 2, 1863, folios 1-3; and, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, September 25, 1863, folios 111-112.

As long as the Chinese employed a foreigner like General Burgevine to lead their troops there was no objection to afford him the moral and material support he derived from our protecting Shanghai and its immediate neighbourhood. . . .²⁵

Bruce rigorously protested this development to Russell and to Brown. He appealed to Russell for the power to prevent officers from indiscriminantly entering into Chinese service.²⁶ He warned Brown that according to the tone of instructions from Britain it was not expedient for British officers to command Chinese troops in actions against the rebels beyond the radius necessary to protect the treaty ports.²⁷ Bruce refused to accept any responsibility for their employment. Perhaps consciously aware of it, Bruce was not correct in his warning to Brown on this matter. It would appear to be already well-established that an officer on half pay with the Queen's licence, upon which grounds Gordon was qualified, could "go anywhere", but officers who retained regimental rank had to keep within the thirty mile radius.²⁸ However, Bruce was completely defeated on this question when the Foreign Office passed judgement specifically on his views as to limiting all British officers in the Chinese forces to the radius. In a memorandum to the War Office, it was noted by the Foreign Office that Bruce had been specifically instructed on May 23, 1863 that:

. . . Lord Russell did not consider it essential that "Ward's force" should be commanded by an officer a Subject or Citizen of a Non-Treaty Power, the main point of importance in Lord Russell's opinion being that such officer should be competent to command.

I am to add that Lord Russell does not concur in Sir. F. Bruce's opinion that British officers should not command, or serve in, the Chinese Force beyond the 30 mile radius. An imprudent or ambitious officer, regardless of the rights and customs of the Chinese might do much mischief, but such a person is as likely to

²⁵FO 17/392, Bruce to Russell, Peking, June 25, 1863, folios 189-198.

²⁶FO 17/392, Bruce to Russell, Peking, June 12, 1863, folios 139-150; and, FO 17/394, Memo on Sir F. Bruce's No. 145, September 9, 1863, folios 64-65.

²⁷FO 17/392, Bruce to Brown, Peking, June 11, 1863, folios 159-161; and, FO 17/392, Bruce to Brown, Peking, June 25, 1863, folios 200-201.

²⁸For example, see FO 17/417, Hammond to Lugard, Foreign Office, London, April 23, 1863, folio 189.

belong to any other nation as the British, and could not be recalled, as a British officer might be by withdrawing his licence to serve under the Emperor of China.²⁹

In addition to the activity beyond the thirty mile radius, Bruce was becoming increasingly alarmed at the regional control of the Ever Victorious Army as well as the similar force (the Ningpo Anglo-Chinese force) in Chekiang. He continued his earlier opposition to regional control on the grounds

. . . that unless the force be properly constituted, and relieved from the necessity of obeying the orders of the local governors it will do no real and permanent good, and that the officer who commands it will speedily find himself in a position which is neither compatible with his professional reputation, nor with what is due to the character of a British officer.³⁰

Bruce was more specific than before in accusing Li of showing no disposition to adopt military improvements and of using the Ever Victorious Army only as a mobile shock force.³¹ But, in addition to these objections, Bruce felt that the support by the British military for such regional forces was seriously weakening the power of the central government in the provinces.³²

As well as carrying on the debate with Russell and Brown, Bruce also approached Kung with demands for a change.³³ The substance of Bruce's communication with Kung was to threaten to withdraw Gordon and any other officer serving beyond the thirty mile radius if China did not live up to the treaty agreements. He further warned Kung that

²⁹FO 17/403, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, September 2, 1863, folios 1-3.

³⁰FO 17/392, Bruce to Brown, Peking, June 11, 1863, folios 159-161.

³¹FO 17/392, Bruce to Russell, Peking, June 25, 1863, folios 189-198; and FO 228/347, Markham to Bruce, Shanghai, April 16, 1863, folios 267-269.

³²FO 17/392, Bruce to Russell, Peking, June 12, 1863, folios 139-150.

³³FO 17/392, Memorandum of the Substance of Observations, Addressed to the Prince of Kung by Sir F. Bruce, on the 5th June, 1863, folios 151-157; FO 17/393, Bruce to Kung, Peking, June 16, 1863, folios 156-161; FO 17/393, Bruce to Kung, Peking, July 2, 1863, folios 171-176; and also see FO 17/393, Kung to Bruce, Peking, June 19, 1863, folios 163-169.

he would only authorize the re-employment of British officers under two conditions:

1. That the Imperial Government take into its own hands the customs revenues as a means of ensuring the regular payment of the force in order that discipline may be preserved.

2. That these forces be directly under the Imperial Government from which alone they are to receive their orders, and to which only they are to be responsible. They will thus act with the provincial authorities, but will not be under their control.³⁴

But even Kung refused to come around to Bruce's line of thinking. By now Kung was probably quite aware of the emptiness of Bruce's threats to withdraw military assistance and he challenged his bluff. He agreed with the principle that the British minister has the right to refuse permission to British officers wanting to serve the Chinese. But once their service had been authorized it was up to the Chinese alone to decide under whose command they were to be and from what source they were to be paid.

. . . the foreign military officers, who it [the Chinese government] may engage to assist in the instruction of its forces, in as much as these are in the pay of the Chinese government, cannot limit their services to action against the enemy, only at the ports of trade. Their movement and the distribution of them must be entirely under the direction of the Chinese Govt.³⁵

By late July, it was obvious to Bruce that his protestations and complaints were having no effect at all. Although still not satisfied with Gordon's position under Li and still objecting to British officers serving beyond the thirty mile radius, Bruce decided to call a truce and stated that ". . . I do not consider it advisable to interfere with that officer's command."³⁶ Bruce had always been aware of the danger of upsetting Gordon and causing him to quit, leaving

³⁴FO 17/393, Bruce to Kung, Peking, June 16, 1863, folios 156-161.

³⁵FO 17/393, Kung to Bruce, Peking, June 19, 1863, folios 163-169.

³⁶FO 17/393, Bruce to Russell, Peking, July 29, 1863, folios 152-154.

the force leaderless.³⁷ But now he expressed the belief that with Gordon commanding the force there was a good chance of finally forcing ". . . the insurgents to abandon Soochow and the line of the great canal, without which Shanghai cannot be looked upon as secure from attack."³⁸ He informed Gordon that:

I would rather see you in command. . . than anyone else, as, I think the corps in your hands will become dangerous to the Insurgents, without being dangerous to the Government and oppressive to the people.³⁹

This praise for Gordon may have been only a ruse to gain Gordon's confidence and salve any suspicions or uneasiness Gordon may have felt towards Bruce concerning the tenure of his position. For while Bruce is expressing confidence in him, Wade is stressing to Gordon the necessity of reorganizing the force and bringing it under central control.⁴⁰ In short, it would appear that Bruce and Wade, realising the hopelessness of reforming the force through external measures were trying to interest Gordon in their ideas. There is some vague evidence that this attempt to make Gordon a supporter of central control of the Ever Victorious Army had been underway for several months.⁴¹

Comments by Gordon on the modernization role of the Ever Victorious Army and the question of centralized control are infrequent, and when expressed are extremely vague and confused.⁴² Gordon agreed with the principle that the force had an important role in modernizing

³⁷For example, BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, Peking, May 21, 1863, folios 31-34.

³⁸BM 52386, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, July 28, 1863, folios 65-66.

³⁹Ibid., folios 65-66.

⁴⁰BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, Shanghai, July 21, 1863, folios 56-57; and, BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, close to Hong Kong, July 27, 1863, folios 63-64.

⁴¹BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, Peking, March 15, 1863, folios 9-10; and, BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, Peking, May 21, 1863, folios 31-36.

⁴²BM 52389, Views Respecting the Sungkeong Force, Gordon, Sung-chiang, May 5, 1863, folios 3-6.

the Chinese army by providing a nucleus for future improvements. He stressed that he had absolutely no desire to serve as a mere mercenary. But Gordon parted company with Bruce on the question of regional and central control. Gordon believed that the force must be under regional control, that is the control of Li, to avoid the petty jealousies of local officials and what he felt would be the eventual disinterest of Peking.

In my opinion . . . , the only way which this force or any other can carry on, would be that it should be under the control to a certain degree of the Governor of the Province (as it is now).⁴³

But this was with two basic changes. First, the force would be paid from Peking so as not to be subject to the caprice of Li.

. . . it now exists from month to month, and no guarantee whatever can be extended it with respect to how long it may last, this of course deters officers from entering, and also the commander from engaging men.⁴⁴

The second change would be that the officers held their commissions from Peking rather than from Li. This would probably help attract a better class of officers. This was as far as Gordon's view of central control went. Li would still have control of the direction of the activities of the force and the degree to which it would be utilized in modernizing the military forces of the area.

By summer, Gordon's attention was occupied with his first serious falling out with Li Hung-chang. Still finding the force oppressively expensive, Li was reneging on meeting its costs. He probably did not expect Gordon to protest strongly about his tightfistedness, but Gordon immediately wrote to Li:

In consequence of monthly difficulties I experience in getting the payment of the Force made, the non payment of legitimate Bills for Boat hire and munitions of War from H.B.M.'s Government who have done so much for the Imperial Chinese Authorities I have determined on throwing up the command of this Force as my retention of office in these circumstances is derogatory to my position as a British Officer who cannot be a suppliant for what Your Excellency knows to be necessities and should only be too happy to give.⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., folios 3-6.

⁴⁴Ibid., folios 3-6.

⁴⁵FO 17/403, Gordon to Li Hung-chang, Headquarters, K'un-shan, July 25, 1863, folios 151-152.

He informed Li that he would remain in temporary command pending the wishes of Brown and Bruce.⁴⁶

But simultaneous to Gordon's request to be relieved of duty, reliable information arrived in Shanghai that Burgevine was now working with the rebels at Soochow.⁴⁷ There had been rumours to this effect for several weeks, but Burgevine had assured Gordon not to believe them.⁴⁸ With the supporters Burgevine had among the officers and men of the Ever Victorious Army it was essential that the force should not suffer a leadership crisis but remain under stable and trustworthy leadership.⁴⁹ The difficulty had increased by the fact that all the British officers but one or two had left the force in consequence of being obliged to go on half pay.

The result of the force going over to Burgevine could have meant the loss of the artillery to the rebels. Colonel Hough, commander of the British garrison at Shanghai, noted the danger posed by Burgevine.

Burgevine has gone over to the Rebels with some Europeans collected here [Shanghai]: the number varies with the different reports from 100 to 1000 but 300 will probably be nearer the mark . . . information states [Burgevine had] unrestrained licence to pillage every town they take, even Shanghai itself [This]. . . would be an idle threat even under the present reduced state of the garrison but for the alarming defection of Major Gordon's force, who are all it is said traitorously inclined to side with Burgevine. Names of traitors are freely given, being those of Major Gordon's best officers of the land forces, as well as those commanding steamers. This, if true, would virtually be giving our siege train, now with Major Gordon, into the Rebels' hands, and to oppose which Capt. Murray informs me, we have not a gun of equal force. . . . it is idle to suppose that they would respect the 30-mile radius when they had no town outside with wealth enough to support their rabble hordes.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Ibid., folios 151-152; and, FO 17/403, Gordon to Brown, Headquarters, K'un-shan, July 25, 1863, folio 149.

⁴⁷BM 52386, Burgevine to Gordon, July 25, 1863, folio 38.

⁴⁸FO 228/348, Markham to Bruce, Shanghai, August 3, 1863, folios 134-143; and, BM 52386, Macartney to Gordon, July 15, 1863, folios 53-54.

⁴⁹FO 228/348, Markham to Bruce, Shanghai, August 3, 1863, folios 134-143. The informant of Burgevine's activities, a filibuster by the name of Townsend, told Markham ". . . to warn Major Gordon of his officers, he says they are, with the exception of one or two, in Burgevine's interests."

⁵⁰FO 17/403, Hough to Brown, Shanghai, August 4, 1863, folios 146-148.

Gordon recognized the danger presented by Burgevine and immediately agreed to remain in command of the force until the threat passed.⁵¹ He was supported in this decision by Brown, who did not want him to resign at all.⁵²

Meanwhile, Burgevine had arrived in Soochow with 120 foreigners and one of Gordon's steamers, the Kajow.⁵³ Gordon immediately began a period of more cautious warfare. Up to this point he had been actively and successfully assisting in laying the ground work to the siege of Soochow by participating in the taking of surrounding towns and forts in order to cut the city's communications. But with Burgevine in Soochow, he was desirous to put distance between Burgevine and the force. The Ever Victorious Army returned to their base at K'un-shan from where they hardly moved again until the end of September. So alarmed was Gordon that he determined to move all siege guns and munitions to Shanghai, for fear they might be lost to Burgevine.⁵⁴

Gordon was reinforced at K'un-shan by Kingsley's force of disciplined Chinese.⁵⁵ In September, under Brown's direction, a substantial British force was sent to K'un-shan and nearby T'ai-ts'ang.⁵⁶

With a view to ensuring the safety of the Siege Train, and Securing Major Gordon in his position at Quinsan [K'un-shan] - a post of the utmost importance with reference to the Security of the District and the City of Shanghai - the Major General [Brown] has decided upon reinforcing the Garrison by 200 men from the 2nd. Belooch Batt. This detachment is not to leave Quinsan, but to be confined entirely to its defence in case of an attack by the Rebels.

⁵¹Ibid., folios 146-148; and, FO 228/348, Gordon to Markham, K'un-shan, August 7, 1863, folios 162-163.

⁵²FO 17/403, Brown to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Hong Kong, August 12, 1863, folios 144-145.

⁵³Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁴FO 228/348, Gordon to Caine, August 7, 1863, folios 158-161.

⁵⁵WO 107/5/Part 3, Shanghai, August 24, 1863, no foliation.

⁵⁶FO 17/404, Brown to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, September 3, 1863, folios 32-34; and, FO 17/404, Brown to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, September 14, 1863, folios 100-104.

A Field Force consisting of a half Battery R.A. and 200 67th Regiment the whole under command of Captain Murray R.A. proceeds to Tait-san [T'ai-ts'ang] in a few days as a moral support to the Quinsan Garrison.⁵⁷

In addition, the 67th Regiment's departure from Shanghai was postponed because of the emergency.⁵⁸

Brown had originally intended to counter the Burgevine threat by allowing full-pay regular British officers to join the Ever Victorious Army with no limits on their serving beyond the radius.⁵⁹ The Foreign Office, realizing the situation, agreed to this action ". . . during the present critical state of affairs in the neighbourhood of Shanghai," ⁶⁰ This would have been a direct challenge to the disloyal officers serving in the force. Threatened in their positions, the officers probably would have led the force in desertion or mutiny. The power of these officers should not be underestimated. They were too large in numbers, well over 100, and too well entrenched in the force to be suddenly and easily replaced. They were difficult to manage, ". . . touchy as to precedence and inclined to make themselves up into states of mind which led them to perform most foolish activities."⁶¹ Gordon had serious difficulties with them on several occasions, but it was absolutely impossible to displace them.⁶²

Brown must have been made aware of the nature of the officer

⁵⁷WO 107/5/Part 3, Shanghai, September 14, 1863, no foliation.

⁵⁸FO 17/403, Brown to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Hong Kong, August 12, 1863, folios 144-145.

⁵⁹FO 17/404, Brown to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, September 3, 1863, folios 32-34.

⁶⁰FO 17/404, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, November 9, 1863, folio 39.

⁶¹BM 52393, Memo on the Composition of the Disciplined Chinese Force known as the Ever-Victorious Army, Ward's Force and Quinsan Force, folio 27. This memo appears to be in Gordon's handwriting.

⁶²For example, just a few days before the Burgevine crisis Gordon was faced with the mass resignation of his artillery officers over the selection of an officer to command the artillery. See BM 52386, Petition by artillery officers, K'un-shan, July 25, 1863, folios 59-62.

problem, for two weeks later he proposed instead to send a regular British force to Gordon's assistance.⁶³ Both the Foreign Office and the War Office agreed that this action would be more effectual and less objectionable than full-pay British officers serving with the force.⁶⁴ The Foreign Office went as far as to give Brown permission to use British troops beyond the thirty mile radius in the future ". . . under circumstances of similar emergency."

Li was not receptive to Brown increasing British military activity beyond the radius. He was becoming concerned with the over-involvement of foreign powers in the rebellion, claiming it would lead to incalculable complications.⁶⁵ He viewed it as part of a plot to gain trade concessions from China in return for what was now unnecessary assistance.⁶⁶ Although he may have been misinterpreting Brown's act of support for Gordon, Li claimed that Brown was offering to assist in the taking of Soochow. Gordon's participation was not viewed in the same way.

If Gordon alone helps us to make the attack [on Soochow], he does so in command of Chinese soldiers and is supported by Chinese subsidies. This is appropriate both in form and in substance,. . . .⁶⁷

With the support of regular British forces at K'un-shan and T'ai-ts'ang, Gordon moved the Ever Victorious Army into the Soochow area once more.⁶⁸ In the last days of September and in early October the forces under Gordon and Burgevine clashed on several occasions. Burgevine's small force of foreign mercenaries in concert with Taiping troops under Taiping leaders had the worst of these encounters. On October 3, Burgevine approached Gordon under truce.

⁶³FO 17/404, Brown to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Shanghai, September 14, 1863, folios 100-104.

⁶⁴FO 17/404, Crofton to Hammond, War Office, London, November 17, 1863, folios 97-98; and, FO 17/404, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, November 25, 1863, folios 197-198.

⁶⁵Cheng, Chinese Sources, pp. 114-119.

⁶⁶Ibid., Memorial from Li Hung-chang, September 14, 1863, p. 120.

⁶⁷Ibid., Li Hung-chang to Hsüeh Huan, October 12, 1863, p. 121.

⁶⁸Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, pp. 54-56.

He professed himself disappointed with the conduct of the rebel chiefs, and willing to come over with the foreigners, and steamer, and artillery, if the men were paid for their service with the rebels; this was agreed to, and Burgevine returned to Soochow; it being left to him to fix his own time.⁶⁹

Within the next few days, the British and American consuls issued pardons for their nationals in the employ of the rebels if they wanted to leave the rebel ranks.⁷⁰ Li agreed to accept Burgevine's surrender and at the same time made an agreement with the American Consul in Shanghai for the expulsion of Burgevine from China.⁷¹

However, Burgevine did not immediately leave the Taipings.⁷² He was involved in one more battle, on October 12, which ended in a disastrous defeat with the loss of half of his men and the Kajow. Viewed with increasing suspicion by the rebels and treated with little favour after his repeated failures in the field, Burgevine and his men saw little future with the rebels. Within a few days, Burgevine and forty to fifty of his men deserted the rebel ranks. The crisis ended, the Ever Victorious Army returned to its original programme of cutting off the remaining communications of Soochow. The British garrison at K'un-shan and the force at T'ai-ts'ang returned to Shanghai on October 28.⁷³

Gordon's disagreement with Li over financial difficulties had been successfully concluded to Gordon's satisfaction.⁷⁴ Quite early in August, Li promised that the force would never again be in arrears in its pay and bills, and he immediately settled all outstanding

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 56.

⁷⁰BM 52386, Notification by Markham, Shanghai, October 7, 1863, folios 90-91; and, BM 52386, Notification by Seward, Shanghai, October 7, 1863, folio 92.

⁷¹Cheng, Chinese Sources, Li Hung-chang to Hsüeh Huan, October 12, 1863; and, Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, November 4, 1863, pp. 121 and 123.

⁷²Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, pp. 57-58.

⁷³WO 107/5/Part 3, Shanghai, October 21, 1863, no foliation.

⁷⁴FO 228/348, Markham to Futai (Li), Shanghai, August 8, 1863, folios 172-176; and, FO 228/348, Markham to Bruce, Shanghai, August 11, 1863, folios 154-157.

claims connected with it. Gordon was put at ease on this point, but by mid-September he was again tendering his resignation.⁷⁵

Gordon expressed his desire to resign should the British government decide to form the Ever Victorious Army into a British contingent. He was probably referring to the discussion concerning Staveley's proposal to expand the force and increase British control and participation.⁷⁶ Gordon felt that he could not command such a force because he had appointed unfit men to positions from which he could not easily remove them. This difficulty could be overcome by the appointment of a new commander. No doubt in view of the situation with Burgevine, Gordon was feeling suspicious of the loyalties of his officers. He advised Brown that the force was a danger to everyone and that the best remedy to this danger would be to appoint some officer of position from England to reorganize the force thoroughly.

Bruce was elated when he learned of this new willingness on the part of Gordon to resign from his position. Regardless of the then still volatile situation with Burgevine, Bruce urged Gordon immediately to resign his command.⁷⁷ This was certainly not done out of any support for continued British participation, which was what Gordon had offered as an alternative to his service.⁷⁸ Rather Bruce asked Gordon to resign to bring attention to the two well-established demands of bringing the force under Peking's control and ending the system of supplying British officers, such as Gordon, just to fight the Taipings. Bruce explained his views to Russell:

My views as to the course to be pursued in China, remain unaltered, and indeed are confirmed. If the disorder in this country were confined to the districts in which the Taeping insurgents are in arms, and if their defeat would restore tranquility, it might be argued that any course of proceeding, likely to attain that end, would be sufficient, and that it would not be of much importance

⁷⁵FO 17/394, Gordon to Brown, Headquarters, K'un-shan, September 18, 1863, folios 178-179.

⁷⁶See Chapter III, pp. 64-67.

⁷⁷BM 52386, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, October 7, 1863, folios 88-89.

⁷⁸Ibid., folios 88-89; and, FO 17/394, Bruce to Russell, Peking, October 29, 1863, folios 195-198.

whether the Government reformed its military system or not. But such, unfortunately, is not the case. The Taeping insurrection has its root in, and derives its force from, the anarchial elements existing in many of the provinces, which the Chinese Government, owing to its defective military organization, is unable to put down, and there is no ground for anticipating permanent improvement so long as that organization is not improved. To effect this it is necessary that the central Government should form an Imperial force under its orders, which should be available in all parts of the country, and that it should not rely, as it has hitherto done, on the local militia of each province, which act independently under its own authority. In no other way does it appear to me that the empire can exist in its present form.⁷⁹

Bruce pointed out that the campaign successes of foreign officered forces involved in the suppression of the Taipings impeded rather than furthered the cause of military improvement by removing the immediacy of the problem.

Nothing came of Gordon's offer to resign the command of the force. No action was taken on Gordon's suggestion that a more senior and experienced officer be found to replace him. Neither was any real support given to Bruce by Russell in his attempt to use this occasion to end the use of British officers in leading Chinese troops beyond the thirty mile radius.⁸⁰

In late November, Bruce and Wade admitted defeat in their attempt to secure changes in the position and role of Gordon and the Ever Victorious Army.⁸¹ Bruce wrote:

I fear there is no chance at present of carrying out a re-organization of the Chinese Army. The Provincial Authorities will not keep up a drilled force which is expensive to them and which they can't manage. The same thing has happened to the [Lay-Osborn] flottila. We must therefore do what we can to protect ourselves in a small way, and rely on clearing the country near Shanghae with forces such as you have got together and steamers like the Hyson. We will go on at present until the government at home has time to decide what it will do about the "Order in Council" after they

⁷⁹FO 17/394, Bruce to Russell, Peking, October 13, 1863, folios 165-173.

⁸⁰FO 17/394, Bruce to Russell, Peking, October 13, 1864, folios 165-173; FO 17/389, Russell to Bruce, Foreign Office, London, December 23, 1863, folios 206-207; and, FO 17/389, Russell to Bruce, Foreign Office, London, November 10, 1863, folio 150.

⁸¹FO 17/407, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, November 22, 1863, folios 126-129; and, BM 52386, Wade to Gordon, Peking, November 22, 1863, folios 134-136. These two letters are almost identical in content and even in wording.

hear Osborn's history.⁸²

Bruce agreed to Gordon continuing to serve under Li and operating beyond the radius as long as Li continued to abide by the sixteen point agreement signed in January. Bruce even went as far as to point out that it was in Britain's interests that Soochow be retaken and the silk district and line of the Imperial canal be cleared.

This sanctioning of Gordon's combat role was due in part to renewal of the problems with Japan.⁸³ Bruce informed Gordon that with the "menacing state of affairs in Japan" no step should be taken which would weaken the Imperial cause near Shanghai.

Bruce also recognized the entrenched power of provincial officials on military matters and the futility of trying to dislodge this power. He wrote Gordon:

I would use all my influence to get you put in a proper position. But I have found out that a foreign officer must really depend on the relations he keeps up with the provincial authorities with whom he is acting. The Chinese system makes it difficult for the Peking govt. to interfere in such questions with the discretion of the governor.⁸⁴

Bruce's long attempt to regain control of the British military assistance programme had failed. He had lost it in mid-1862 when local British military and consular officials began to offer assistance directly to local Chinese officials. There were basic and important differences between what Bruce wanted to offer the Chinese and what was being offered. Specifically, with the Ever Victorious Army, Bruce wanted the force brought under central control, to be used as a nucleus for a modernized

⁸²FO 17/407, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, November 22, 1863, folios 126-129.

⁸³The early 1860's in Japan was a period of extremely anti-western sentiment, often manifesting itself in acts of murder and violence towards westerners with the intent to drive them from Japan. In the summer of 1863, limited armed conflict broke out between the Japanese, specifically the Satsuma and Choshu clans, and the foreigners, including the British. Victory ultimately favoured the west, but the situation remained tense and uncertain throughout the period under study. There was the continual threat that the affair might suddenly explode into a full scale war with all of Japan. See Richard Storry, A History of Modern Japan (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1963), pp. 97-103.

⁸⁴FO 17/407, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, November 22, 1863, folios 126-129.

Chinese army and that its active military role be limited to replacing the British military presence at Shanghai. His struggle to introduce these changes was unsuccessful. The force remained under the control of Li, who was more concerned with using the force against the Taipings than in a military reform programme. Li had the full support of the British military in China, who also saw the force primarily as a means to suppress the Taipings.

The Soochow Massacre

By November 1863, Gordon probably had little inclination to resign his command. The campaign to take Soochow, one of the chief rebel strongholds in Kiangsu, was reaching its climax with the completion of the siege circle and the almost daily capture of rebel positions.⁸⁵ Gordon and his force were playing an active and fairly important role in this action, the most significant of the Ever Victorious Army's service.

On November 29, the defense perimeter of Soochow had been penetrated as far as the city's walls. Preparations were made to attack the city.

. . . but symptoms of wavering began to show themselves in the garrison. Overtures of surrender were made by some of the chiefs, which were suspected by the Mow Wang [the Taiping commander at Soochow], whom the conspirators slew at the council table, at 2 p.m. on the 5th December. They sent out his head to the Futai [Li] that night and gave up the city on the 6th December. They were, however, treacherously murdered by the Futai on the afternoon of the 7th December.

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The force remained inactive at Quinsan till the end of February, in consequence of the above treachery of the Governor; but though the same was inexcusable, the writer did not consider that the object which the British Government had in view when they allowed him to serve the Imperialists should be allowed to fall through, and, consequently, the force resumed active operations on the 23rd February.⁸⁶

Thus several years after the event, Gordon recorded in a calm and rather terse manner the then highly controversial Soochow massacre.

⁸⁵Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, pp. 58-64.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 64-65.

At the time it was an event that led to a serious break with Li, the most emotional of Gordon's resignation threats and the threatened dissolution of the force.

The imperialists, Gordon included, were not anxious to make a direct attack on Soochow.⁸⁷ It was a strongly fortified city with a large garrison and its capture presented the most formidable task yet faced by Li's forces. Rather, it was hoped that an arrangement could be made for the peaceful and bloodless capitulation of the city. General Ching (Ch'êng Hsüeh-ch'i), an ex-rebel and one of Li's chief officers, negotiated secretly with some of the Taiping wangs or chiefs of Soochow.

Gordon became involved in these negotiations through Ching's insistence that he be present at two of the secret meetings.⁸⁸ At the first meeting, on December 1, Gordon met three minor Taiping chiefs in Ching's boat, but nothing of consequence was discussed. On December 2, Ching pressed Gordon into meeting the Na Wang (Kao Yün-kuan) one of the principal chiefs of Soochow and one of those most interested in surrendering. Gordon was reluctant to meet him but did so at Ching's insistence.

Accordingly, that evening I met him in the evacuated stockades, off the north gate. His first expression after seeing me was that he wished me to help him. I answered that I would be most willing to do so if he would tell me in what way. I also said that the proposal he had made the day before, . . . [to Ching, in which Na Wang's men would wear white turbans and remain neutral when Soochow was attacked by the imperialists]. . . , appeared to me impracticable, in as much as if the Imperialists assaulted and took the city it would be impossible to restrain the force I command from indiscriminate looting and massacre; that if I agreed to the terms now I would be certain to fail in maintaining them afterwards; that therefore if they were desirous of coming over and could make

⁸⁷Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, December 6, 1863, pp. 124-126; and, BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, Cmnd. 3408, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut-Col. Gordon's Positions in the Chinese Service after the fall of Soochow," Memorandum embodying the substance of Major Gordon's Reports on the affairs at Soochow, between the 28th of November and 7th December, 1863, pp. 431-435.

⁸⁸BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Memorandum embodying the substance of Major Gordon's Reports on the affairs at Soochow, pp. 431-435.

terms with the Imperialists they should give over one gate at a guarantee, The Na Wang said he would consult with the other Wangs on the subject. . . . I then told him to arrange matters with General Ching, after which I returned to my quarters.⁸⁹

The next day, Ching told Gordon that he thought Gordon's talk with the Na Wang had been most successful and that the city should surrender shortly. On December 4, it was arranged that the Taiping chiefs would throw the recalcitrant Mu Wang over the city wall into the hands of the imperialists. It was agreed by Ching that the Mu Wang would be made Gordon's prisoner and subject to his protection. However, on that day the Mu Wang was instead assassinated by his subordinates during a heated argument and only his head was sent out to the imperialists. This signalled the surrender of Soochow.

For two days matters remained quiet and at the status quo. The Taipings continued to occupy the city with their forces, while the imperialists had control of at least one gate. Gordon passed freely through the city, finding it orderly and peaceful. On two occasions while in Soochow, he met the Na Wang in the company of several of the other wangs. Questioning them closely as to whether everything had gone on properly and to their satisfaction, Gordon received an affirmative response. The second meeting was on December 6, a few minutes before they left to surrender formally the city to Li and pledge their loyalty to the Ch'ing.

In the afternoon and evening of December 6, matters took a completely different course. Imperialist forces suddenly and without warning broke into Soochow and began to loot, murder and destroy without restraint. Trapped in the city with none of his force, Gordon was powerless to stop the massacre and pillaging. As this action by the imperialists was in complete contrast to the surrender arrangement, Gordon suspected something had gone amiss in the meeting between Li and the wangs. But he did not know that they had been executed until he discovered their decapitated and mutilated bodies on the morning of December 7.

Gordon was extremely upset by this act of Li, to the degree

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 431-435.

of warning that ". . . if I caught him I should be obliged to shoot him."⁹⁰ Gordon considered it an act of diabolic and barbaric treachery to induce the wangs to surrender Soochow with promises of pardon and then to execute them and throw the city open to massacre and destruction. The murder of the wangs was to Gordon a personal loss, for he admired and expressed an affinity for several of them.⁹¹

But what troubled Gordon the most about this grisly affair was his personal involvement. Because of his slight participation in the surrender negotiations, Gordon felt responsible for actuating the surrender of the city and thus responsible for delivering the unsuspecting wangs to Li's executioners. At the time of the negotiations, Gordon believed that the imperialists always kept faith in their negotiations with the rebels. "I therefore had no suspicion that the Imperialists would not keep perfect faith in this instance."⁹²

Prince Wittgenstein, a Prussian prince who was in the company of Gordon during this affair, explained exactly how Gordon felt he was implicated.

. . . although it was General Ching who made the arrangements with the Na Wang about the surrender of the city, it is clear that he was induced to pass over to the Imperialists with his men in consequence of Major Gordon's attitude at the interview, when he was informed by Major Gordon that he could not guarantee their safety during an attack if the men were to be distinguished simply by wearing white turbans; and that, if they really wished to surrender, they must give up a gate as a guarantee. The Na Wang naturally presumed that Major Gordon could, if they would do so, guarantee their safety, and consequently immediately after the death of Mu Wang he opened the Eastern Gate. . . . It would appear that the Footae made use of Major Gordon in the consultation between General Ching and the Wangs, so as to induce the latter to come out and surrender.⁹³

⁹⁰BM 52386, Gordon to person unknown, K'un-shan, December 24, 1863, folios 143-148.

⁹¹Ibid., folios 143-148.

⁹²BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Memorandum embodying the substance of Major Gordon's Reports on the affairs at Soochow, pp. 431-435.

⁹³Ibid., Memorandum embodying Extracts from letter of Prince Wittgenstein to Sir F. Bruce, pp. 436-437.

Further, Wittgenstein, and undoubtedly Gordon as well, believed that the execution of the wangs was a premeditated affair. According to Wittgenstein, Li's planning was so well laid that he had even planned to render Gordon powerless so that he could not oppose the executions. Wittgenstein pointed out that just previous to the executions, Li

. . . would not allow Major Gordon to go on against the rebels nor keep his soldiers at Soo-chow, because he was afraid lest, in the latter case, Major Gordon would oppose the execution of the Wangs, and therefore he induced him to remove his troops to Quinsan.⁹⁴

Gordon, thoroughly sickened by the entire matter, did not wish to continue in command of the force or have any further communication with Li. But before taking any action, he applied to Brown for advice as to what his position should be in view of the Soochow affair. Brown, shocked by the affair, immediately undertook to have the matter fully investigated, meanwhile placing Gordon and the force under his personal command.⁹⁵ Within a few days Brown had an interview with Li to hear his explanation and to explain to him the future relations between Li and Gordon.

I speedily ascertained that, though the Futai was prepared to take on himself the whole responsibility of the murder of the Wangs, and the sacking of the city, and fully to exonerate Major Gordon from all blame, he was either unable or unwilling to offer any exculpation, or explanation of his conduct, and it only remained for me to express my opinion and future intentions.

This I did in as few words as possible. I expressed the indignation and grief with which the English people, together with all the civilized nations of the world, would regard his cruelty and perfidy. I exposed to him my views of the impolicy of a fruitless severity which paralyzed his friends, and drove the rebels to desperation, at the time when we had good reason to believe they were prepared to capitulate and return to their homes in peace. I then informed him . . . that I deemed it my duty to refer the whole matter to our Minister at Peking, and that pending such reference, Major Gordon had received instructions from me to suspend all active aid to the Imperialist cause, further than protecting Soochow, knowing its importance to the safety of Shanghai, and

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 436-437.

⁹⁵BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, Cmd. no. 3295, "Papers Relating to the Affairs of China," Brown to Bruce, Headquarters, Shanghai, December 17, 1863, p. 304.

warning the rebels to abstain from attacking his position. I concluded by expressing my unhesitating conviction, that after what had occurred, my Government would withdraw all assistance hitherto afforded to the Imperial cause, recall Major Gordon, and all English subjects serving under him, and disband the Anglo-Chinese Force.⁹⁶

Li seems to have been completely taken by surprise by the reaction to his execution of the wangs. On the day of the executions, he had even recommended in a memorial that Gordon be given some manner of recognition for his services ". . . so that he may carry himself with pride after returning to his country upon the conclusion of the rebellion."⁹⁷ Within a few days this same man was expressing the most dangerous and traitorous threats, such as turning his force loose on the imperialists. Li was at a complete loss as to what to expect from Gordon, or foreigners in general.

First, he [Gordon] says that the rebel Na [Wang] should not have killed the rebel Mu [Wang]. Now he again says that the rebel Na should not have been killed, and that he will soon lead the Ever-Victorious Army against the Government troops. Having been persuaded . . . not to do so, he has yet invited Kao Shêng-piao, the adopted son of the rebel Na, together with more than one thousand Cantonese veteran brigands to join him. His intentions are rather difficult to predict.⁹⁸

The six bogus Wangs and five bogus Heavenly Generals, captured and executed, were all savage followers of the rebel Chung [Wang]. This gives me some satisfaction. But the [foreign] devils have been entirely condemnatory, and have almost started hostilities with us. Now they have somewhat calmed down.⁹⁹

According to William Mayers, an interpreter with the British, Li was anxious to avoid a falling out with Gordon and the British. Referring to the interview between Brown and Li, at which he acted as interpreter, he noted that Li was ill at ease about the whole affair and showed visible relief when informed that Gordon would continue in command for the moment.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 304.

⁹⁷Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, December 6, 1863, pp. 124-126.

⁹⁸Ibid., Memorial from Li Hung-chang, December 13, 1863, pp. 126-127.

⁹⁹Ibid., Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-ch'uan, December 25, 1863, p. 128.

On General Brown's taking leave of him, the Footae suddenly grasped me by the arm and said, "I look to you to arrange matters, and prevent a breach of friendship."¹⁰⁰

But concerning his action at Soochow, Li felt neither remorse nor regret. He viewed the affair as an internal matter, perfectly legal and necessary under the circumstances.¹⁰¹ The wangs had presented themselves in a most unrepentant manner, wearing their arms and with their heads unshaved. Their general bearing was "marked by ferocity." Among the demands they presented to Li were the guardianship of Soochow, retention of their troops and the conferment of high rank in imperial service. Within the city their forces were still armed and in control, awaiting the outcome of this meeting.

Such a menacing and intimidating attitude, adopted with a view to enforce demands, has never been assumed by any rebels who have hitherto returned to their allegiance. The slightest hint of non-compliance at the time would have resulted in an immediate catastrophe. If the Wangs had not been promptly beheaded, not only would the Imperial soldiers in the city have been slaughtered to the man, but the enormous force under the command of these Chiefs would still have remained within the rebel ranks, and a subsequent and much greater slaughter would have been unavoidable, and violence would thus have been done to the beneficent principle of heaven and earth, which delights to create (and is opposed to destruction). There was nothing for it but at once to execute the eight Wangs. The remaining rebels immediately shaved their heads and surrendered. . . . By the death of these few men the lives of hundreds of thousands were saved.¹⁰²

As has been pointed out, Brown referred the problem to Bruce. However, owing to an irregularity in the mail service, Bruce did not receive any intimation of the Soochow massacre until late in January.¹⁰³ Until then Bruce had assumed Soochow to have been a crowning and

¹⁰⁰BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut-Col. Gordon's Position," Memorandum embodying the Substance of Mr. Interpreter Mayer's Report to Consul Markham at Shanghai, on Proceedings at Soo-chow," pp. 435-436.

¹⁰¹Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, December 13, 1863; and Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-ch'uan, December 25, 1863, pp. 126-128.

¹⁰²BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Kung to Bruce, February 4, 1864, pp. 437-438. This letter makes direct reference to Li's position on the Soochow executions.

¹⁰³Ibid., Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 12, 1864, pp. 426-428.

unmarred victory for Gordon.¹⁰⁴ When he learnt of the incident, Bruce was suitably shocked, but had the presence of mind to attempt to use the situation to his advantage.¹⁰⁵ While agreeing that no self-respecting British officer could continue to serve under Li in view of the Soochow affair, Bruce was quick to stress that he did not want the force disbanded in consequence. He wrote to Brown:

The object of Her Majesty's Government is to secure Shanghai and its neighbourhood from the ruin and desolation to which it would be exposed from a successful advance on the part of the insurgents, and I see nothing in late events to induce a change in that policy.¹⁰⁶

To Kung he wrote in a similar vein:

Under these circumstances I cannot expect any British officer of character to serve under the orders of or with Governor Li, and the simplest course to take would be to withdraw Major Gordon altogether. But to do so precipitately would be to inflict great injury on the interests of the Chinese Government, and to expose the country and the population between Soo-chow and Shanghai to a repetition of the scene of pillage and massacre that marked the advance of the insurgents two years since. To prevent this it would be necessary to either constitute Major Gordon and the corps he commands a British force, or to increase the foreign garrison and to disband the disciplined legion, of whom many officers and men would join the insurgents. These plans are open to serious objections.¹⁰⁷

Bruce felt it was unnecessary and undesirable for Gordon to resign the command of the force. Rather, the solution lay in changing the role of the force and the conditions of Gordon's service to the position which Bruce had always supported. The force would be limited to garrisoning and defending the area between Shanghai and Soochow. There would be no further offensive action on the part of the force

¹⁰⁴The information being released by Peking to Bruce made no mention of the executions or the subsequent difficulties between Gordon and Li. For example, see ibid., Extract from the Peking Gazette of December 14, 1863, pp. 426-428.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 12, 1864, pp. 426-428; BM 52387, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, January 25, 1864, folios 16-18; and, BM 52387, Bruce to Brown, Peking, January 26, 1864, folios 19-20.

¹⁰⁶BM 52387, Bruce to Brown, Peking, January 26, 1864, folios 19-20.

¹⁰⁷BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Bruce to Kung, Peking, February 10, 1864, pp. 438-439.

against the rebels. Gordon would be relieved of holding any further communication with Li, and would not in any way be under his orders. The financial arrangements of the force and its liaison with the Chinese government would henceforth be handled by one of the Shanghai taotais.

But by the time Bruce had expressed his decision concerning Gordon and his force, Gordon and Li had resolved their differences in a completely opposite manner. Li and Gordon were brought together in early February by Robert Hart, an Irishman in the employ of the imperial customs.

Hart expressed a position rare to a member of the foreign community in Shanghai.¹⁰⁸ He did not believe that Li had murdered the wangs out of treachery or with premeditation, and, consequently, he viewed the dispute between Gordon and Li as an unnecessary misunderstanding. Neither did he believe, as most foreigners did, that Gordon had induced the Taiping wangs to surrender. He pointed out that the negotiations with the Taipings were conducted by Ching and that Gordon met the Taiping delegates not for purposes of negotiation, but display. His presence was to emphasize that the "foreign devil" led Ever Victorious Army was there to attack Soochow. According to Hart, fear rather than confidence was the effect sought by Gordon's presence. Hart also interviewed the adopted son of the Na Wang, an eighteen year old serving in Gordon's bodyguard.

. . . he made no mention whatever of Gordon as having been present when the terms of surrender were arranged between General Ching and the Wangs; and, on the other hand, he said that Na Wang had no fears for his safety when deciding the surrender, because the man who guaranteed his safety, General Ching, was the sworn brother of the Na Wang, having exchanged cards with him after the Chinese fashion.¹⁰⁹

It is doubtful that Gordon accepted Hart's explanation of the matter, but for reasons of his own he was ready to establish a reconciliation with Li. Thus when Hart approached Gordon with a message

¹⁰⁸Ibid., Hart to Bruce, Shanghai, February 6, 1864, pp. 449-453.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 449-453.

from Li to reconcile their differences, Gordon agreed to see Li.¹¹⁰

On February 1, Hart, Gordon and Li met at Soochow.¹¹¹

The execution of the Wangs was touched on as lightly as possible, and it was agreed that it should not form a subject of conversation between Gordon and the Footae¹¹²

Li agreed to issue a proclamation explaining his reasons for executing the wangs and absolving Gordon of any guilt or complicity.¹¹³ Gordon agreed to the employment of the Ever Victorious Army under his command in offensive action against the Taipings. Gordon made this decision on the spot with no previous reference to Brown or Bruce.

In fairness to Gordon, it should be stressed that it was Li who asked for the reconciliation, not Gordon.

In view of the opportunity offered by Hart's visit to Soochow, Your official personally asked him to speak to Gordon and hint at a reconciliation.¹¹⁴

This was but one of many attempts at reconciliation.¹¹⁵ Li was not motivated by the belief that Gordon and his force were essential to the success of his campaign.¹¹⁶ By late December his forces had gone on to further victories and the need for the troublesome Ever Victorious Army daily diminished. Li was fully prepared to accept Gordon's resignation, disarm and disband the force. However, he was prevented from doing so by his superiors in Peking.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 449-453; and Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, February 25, 1864, pp. 130-131.

¹¹¹According to Cheng it was February 2.

¹¹²Bpp, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Hart to Bruce, Shanghai, February 6, 1864, pp. 449-453.

¹¹³Ibid., Proclamation by Li, Footae of Kiang-soo, February 14, 1864, pp. 440-441.

¹¹⁴Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, February 25, 1864, pp. 130-131.

¹¹⁵For example, see BM 52386, Gordon to person unknown, K'un-shan, December 24, 1863, folios 143-148.

¹¹⁶Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, December 27, 1863, pp. 128-129.

The Tsungli Yamen has written to the effect that Gordon should still be retained to command the Ever-Victorious Army, and that discussion on disbanding should take place again after the recovery of Chin-ling [Nanking]. This is, of course, a safer measure. But they waste fifty or sixty thousand cash per month, making new demands. . . every now and then, and keep changing their minds. I have long put up with them, and regret that I have no remedy.¹¹⁷

Likewise the reconciliation was sought at the direct request of Peking.

. . . Your official had repeatedly received secret communications from the Tsungli Yamen to the effect that the British Minister wished Your official to retain Gordon. . . . Your official was told to look for an opportunity for reconciliation.¹¹⁸

The basic reason why Gordon decided to take his force into action again was that their continued inactivity was creating a volatile situation with the foreign mercenary element within and without the force. Gordon explained it to Bruce:

The reasons which activate me are as follows. I know of a certainty that Burgevine meditates a return to the Rebels. That there are upwards of 300 Europeans ready to join them of no character, and that the Futai will not accept another British officer if I leave the service and therefore the Govt. may have some foreigners put in or else the Force put under men of Ward's and Burgevine's stamp of whose action at times, we should never feel certain. I am aware that I am open to very grave censure for the course I am about to pursue, but in the absence of advice, and knowing as I do, that the Peking authorities will support the Futai in what he has done. I have made up my mind to run the risk.¹¹⁹

Gordon told Bruce that he wanted very much to leave the force, but that it was his duty and responsibility to defuse the dangerous situation presented by ". . . the Rabble called the Quinsan Force." He further expressed the belief that if he didn't take his force into the field the rebellion might continue for a further six years.

Brown, who immediately lent his support to Gordon's decision, explained in more detail the pressures that force Gordon's decision, . . . this inaction, . . . [of the force] . . ., was attended with

¹¹⁷Ibid., Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-fan, January 13, 1864, p. 130.

¹¹⁸Ibid., Memorial from Li Hung-chang, February 25, 1864, pp. 130-131.

¹¹⁹FO 228/361, Gordon to Bruce, Soochow, February 6, 1864, no foliation.

serious disadvantage. The officers, though brave and zealous in the field, were of various nations and from a very low class of society.

Such men, when not actively employed, were only too apt to become troublesome and dissatisfied with a leader whose higher motives they could not understand, but whose course of action plainly kept them from opportunities of securing plunder; or those pecuniary rewards which the Footae had been accustomed to bestow in General Ward's time, whenever any important success had been gained.¹²⁰

Brown and Gordon took Li's threats of replacing Gordon with another foreign officer quite seriously. The belief was expressed that Li was "tampering" with the officers in the force and that if Gordon continued his inactivity one of them would be appointed commander. The choice appears to have fallen on one Colonel Brennan, who openly stated he would succeed to the command and " . . . made no secret of what the new arrangements would be."¹²¹ Men of Brennan's ilk formed a large portion of the Ever Victorious Army's officer corps.

Tho' Major Gordon had weeded his force to some extent by dismissing sixteen [including Brennan] of his most insubordinate officers there still remained a considerable American element, and many of the officers looked back with regret to the time when the force was commanded by adventurers like themselves, and would welcome with delight a return to the former system. The rule of a British Officer (Major Gordon being the only one) and even the small amount of discipline he was enable to keep up being too irksome for them.

That this Force even nominally should be under British control was intolerable to these men, it was certain that they would resist any attempt of the British authorities to exercise pressure on the Futai and coerce him into retaining Major Gordon in command should he decide on dismissing that officer and replacing him by one of Ward's former subordinates.

In such a case Major Gordon w. have to submit to an affront even more grievous than that offered to Captain Osborn and Mr. Lay, and our prestige wd. be decidedly lowered

And the dismissal of Major Gordon it is believed had been seriously contemplated should he persist in refusing to take the field.¹²²

¹²⁰BM 52387, Narrative of Events from the Fall of Soochow to the Middle of March 1864, folios 73-76.

¹²¹Ibid., folios 73-76.

¹²²BM 52387, Brown to Secretary of State for War, Headquarters, Hong Kong, March 31, 1864, folios 69-72.

Brown pointed out another "danger of no small magnitude."

The rowdy population of Shanghai composed chiefly of Americans, the dregs of San Francisco, where vigilance committees interfered with their special industrial arts of robbery and murder: and who found at Shanghai and in the Taiping Rebellion a wide field for employing their energies, had been restrained from joining the rebel party by a wholesome dread of Major Gordon's Force. Should that officer however remain inactive or should he be supplanted by one of Ward's officers, these men w' at once join the Taipings

What if Burgevine's plan of forming a third party distinct from the Taipings and Imperialists, sh'd find its realization under an American successor to Major Gordon?

Such a cause would rally round its banner every vagabond European and American in China recruited by a large immigration from the American possessions on the Pacific coast.

It w' be absolutely necessary then to put down such a set of bandits at any cost but how much more advisable to prevent this opportunity from being offered to them.¹²³

Gordon's decision to take the field again was not received favourably at first by all foreigners in China.¹²⁴ But surprisingly, Bruce gave his immediate and unquestioning support to Gordon's decision.¹²⁵ This was despite the fact that Gordon had acted in complete disregard of Bruce's orders, which he received on February 18 just previous to moving his troops up to the front.¹²⁶ Gordon had felt that any further reference to Bruce would have involved the loss of precious time. Bruce recognized Gordon's difficulties with the foreign mercenary element. In fact, he had made reference to this danger in his letter of January 25 to Gordon.¹²⁷ He then advised Gordon that

¹²³Ibid., folio 69-72.

¹²⁴FO 17/416, Printed Extract from Hansard, folio 233; FO 228/367, Markham to Bruce, Shanghai, February 20, 1864, folios 48-49; and, BM 52387, Dent to Gordon, Shanghai, February 5, 1864, folios 28-29.

¹²⁵BM 52387, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, March 12, 1864, folios 58-61; BM 52387, Bruce to Russell, Hong Kong, July 12, 1864, folios 118-119; and BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Bruce to Russell, March 18, 1864, p. 447.

¹²⁶BM 52387, Narrative of Events from the Fall of Soochow to the Middle of March 1864, folios 73-76.

¹²⁷BM 52387, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, January 25, 1864, folios 16-18.

his two guidelines in the command of the force should be the defense of Shanghai and maintaining the discipline of his force. Although it meant that the force would again serve under Li and take an active part in the campaign, he approved of Gordon's decision as a necessary move.

It would be a serious calamity and addition to our embarrassment in China were you compelled to leave your work incomplete and were a sudden dissolution or dispersion of the Chinese force to lead to the recurrence of that state of danger and anxiety from which during the last two years Shanghai has suffered. Her Majesty's government cannot be expected to garrison Shanghai indefinitely, and tranquility cannot be relied on, until a civil administration suited to Chinese ideas and habits is firmly established in the province;

To the force under your command we must look for that result, and to its efficiency and discipline your presence is indispensable. In a body so composed a state of inaction is full of danger and I approve of your not awaiting the result of the enquiry into the Footai's proceedings at Soochow provided you take care that your efforts in favour of humanity are not in the future defeated by the Chinese authorities.¹²⁸

In December, Gordon had demanded that Li be brought to justice for his execution of the wangs. Because of his channels of communication with the Tsung-li yamen, this became the task of Bruce. Bruce pursued the task with somewhat less enthusiasm than Gordon would have deemed requisite. As has been shown Bruce was primarily concerned with using the affair to institute desired changes in the force. Bruce immediately recognized the problem as one of internal Chinese administration and did not ascribe to it as strong international implications as did Brown and Gordon.¹²⁹ Further, Bruce did not press for Li's dismissal, knowing that the successes of Li in the Kiangsu campaign would preclude such action on the part of the Chinese government.¹³⁰ But he did protest Li's actions to the Tsung-li yamen and in return

¹²⁸BM 52387, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, March 12, 1864, folios 58-61.

¹²⁹BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Bruce to Russell, Peking, February 12, 1864, pp. 426-428.

¹³⁰Ibid., pp. 426-428; and, BM 52387, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, January 25, 1864, folios 16-18.

received what were token concessions.¹³¹ There were promises of a full enquiry into the affair, but there is no evidence to show that this was ever fulfilled.¹³² In actual fact, Peking, as well as Li's immediate superior, Tsêng Kuo-fan, supported Li's conduct.¹³³ The Tsung-li yamen was willing to go only as far as reprimanding Li for ". . . not minutely explaining [to Gordon], after the affair was over, the circumstances which prevented him from doing other than he did."¹³⁴ It was agreed by Bruce and the Chinese government that in future cases of capitulation where a foreign officer was present, nothing like the Soochow executions could occur without the consent of that officer.¹³⁵

As China and Foreign nations are now acting together in a spirit of harmony, should Foreign Officers hereafter be engaged in assisting and acting in conjunction with Chinese Authorities, there must in all matters be a conjoint deliberation, so as to ensure that (the action taken) will not be at variance with the principles held to be right either by China or Foreign nations; differences of opinion, resulting in difficulties like the present will thereby be avoided.¹³⁶

In effect, Li felt no real prosecution over the Soochow affair. The only satisfaction that Gordon could claim was the inconvenience and cost for Li of his inactivity. To those who criticized his decision, he could only hope, as he told Hart, that ". . . success . . . will . . . answer all objections."¹³⁷

¹³¹For example, BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Bruce to Kung, Peking, February 10, 1864, pp. 438-439.

¹³²Ibid., Kung to Bruce, February 4, 1864, pp. 437-438.

¹³³Ibid., pp. 437-438; and, Hail, Tsêng Kuo-fan, fn. 57, p. 267.

¹³⁴BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut.-Col. Gordon's Position," Kung to Bruce, February 4, 1864, pp. 437-438.

¹³⁵Ibid., Bruce to Russell, March 18, 1864, p. 447; and BM 52387, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, March 3, 1864, folios 43-48.

¹³⁶BM 52387, Extract from Translation of Despatch from Prince of Kung to Sir F. Bruce, dated February 4, 1864, translated by J.G. Murray, folio 26.

¹³⁷As cited in BM 52387, Hart to Gordon, March 28, 1864, folios 66-67.

CHAPTER V
DISBANDMENT OF THE EVER VICTORIOUS ARMY

In China, the Soochow affair had been quietly settled with Gordon's resumption of active service in February. But in London, the affair was just coming to the attention of the public and the government.¹ The British government was then in the process of cancelling the Order in Council of August 30, 1862, under which the Lay-Osborn Flottila had been formed, as well as that of January 9, 1863, which allowed British officers to seek service in other branches of the Chinese military.² The reasons for this move would appear to have been a reaction to the Lay-Osborn Flottila fiasco, as well as a concession to the largely hostile debate then raging in Britain over British involvement in the Taiping Rebellion.³ But while withdrawing the Order in Council of January 9, 1863, the government did not intend to compromise the positions of Gordon and other officers who may have taken service under it. Its effect would be limited to preventing additional British officers from entering the Chinese armed forces for active service.

But when Brown's and Gordon's version of the Soochow affair became known, it was decided by the British cabinet on March 1 to revoke not only the licence of the Lay-Osborn Flottila, but also that of Gordon.⁴ This would be effective as of June 1, 1864. Bruce was informed by Russell of the decision in a letter written on March 8. Russell also stated that:

The repeal of the first Order [August 30, 1862] was a necessary result of the refusal of the Chinese Government to accept the services of Captain Osborn; while that of the second [January 9, 1863] is intended to mark the dissatisfaction felt by Her

¹FO 17/415, Lugard to Hammond, War Office, London, January 27, 1864, folio 179.

²FO 17/415, Lugard to Hammond, War Office, London, February 1, 1864, folios 211-212.

³Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings, pp. 133-153, with special reference to p. 147.

⁴BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Papers Relating to the Affairs of China," Order in Council, March 1, 1864, p. 309.

Majesty's Government at the conduct of the Chinese authorities on the capture of Soochow, in setting aside the engagements under which alone that important city was, through the intervention of an officer belonging to Her Majesty's service though at the time acting with a Chinese force, restored to the Imperial Government.⁵

Although Bruce was supposedly told by Russell of this decision in early March, Bruce first learned of the revocation of the order through unofficial and rather vague sources. In May he read in the newspapers that the orders in council allowing British officers to enter Chinese service had been revoked.⁶ There was no intimation that Gordon's permission had been revoked and Bruce did not interpret the news that way. Bruce felt certain that the British government was still in favour of a policy of supporting the imperialists against the Taipings in areas where British interests were at stake. He further felt that Gordon should not quit his position as commander until these British interests could be considered completely secure from any further rebel incursions.

Indeed to have gone as far as we have done and to stop before that object is effected, would be an act of madness. You and General Brown are competent to judge when you can retire from taking an active part in the operations and dissolve the force.⁷

By early June, Bruce had still not received Russell's letter of March 8, but he had received China Papers No. 3, a British Parliamentary publication, in which the Order in Council of March 1 was published.⁸

The same lack of direct instructions held true for Brown and Gordon. The Foreign Office did not instruct the War Office to inform Brown of the March 1 Order in Council until April 25.⁹ Instructions were then sent to Brown that the government ". . . have determined that it will be advisable to withdraw explicitly from this

⁵Ibid., Russell to Bruce, Foreign Office, London, March 8, 1864, p. 308.

⁶BM 52387, Bruce to Gordon, Peking, May 5, 1864, folios 96-97.

⁷Ibid., folios 96-97.

⁸FO 17/408, Bruce to Russell, Peking, June 8, 1864, folios 339-341.

⁹FO 17/416, Layard to Lugard, Foreign Office, London, April 25, 1864, folios 252-253.

officer [Gordon] all leave and licence to serve under the Emperor of China."¹⁰ Provision was made for Gordon to continue to serve within the thirty mile radius of Shanghai as a regular British officer, if he was under the orders of Brown and not in the service of the Chinese government.

There is an obvious inconsistency in the matter of forwarding to China the decision taken on March 1. A possible explanation of the matter is that the Palmerston government was pressed by public and parliamentary opinion to take some manner of retributive action for the Soochow affair and the dastardly misuse of a British officer. They withdrew Gordon from the Chinese service, but at the same time they must have felt, as most Englishmen did, that Gordon was essential to the campaign to suppress the Taipings. His sudden and precipitate withdrawal could have dire consequences for this campaign, and perhaps the security of Shanghai. It was common knowledge that Soochow was one of the keys to the suppression of the Taipings and its capture was a signal that the complete collapse of the Taipings would occur very shortly. Therefore, to allow for some further time, not only would the order not take effect until June 1, but as a further precaution the government did not provide immediate and detailed instructions to Brown, Bruce or Gordon.

By the time it was known and fully understood that Gordon must resign from his service with the Chinese, Gordon was already in the final stages of disbanding the Ever Victorious Army and resigning his command.¹¹ It was not being done because Gordon's licence had been

¹⁰FO 17/416, De Grey and Ripon to Brown, War Office, London, April 26, 1864, folios 259-260.

¹¹BM 33222, Charles Gordon to Henry Gordon, Ch'ang-chou, April 18, 1864, folios 38-41. Judging from Gordon's comments in this letter, he did not know yet that his permission to serve the Chinese had been revoked. FO 228/367, Parkes to Gordon, Shanghai, June 1, 1864, folios 264-265. In this letter, Parkes communicated to Gordon that his permission to serve the Chinese had been revoked. This appears to be the earliest letter received by Gordon on this matter. In a letter to his brother, Henry Gordon, he noted the first receipt of this information with the comment that ". . . the recall has come rather late, for I have already, as you know, left the Chinese service, and broken up my force." As cited in Henry Gordon, Events in the Life of Charles George Gordon from its Beginning to the End (London: Kegan, Paul and Co., Ltd., 1886), p. 86.

withdrawn, but for two other reasons: the end of the effectiveness of the force and its internal problems.

The Taipings were virtually suppressed by the spring of 1864. Only Nanking and a few smaller centres remained in Taiping hands. The capture of Ch'ang-chou (Chanchufu) on May 11 was the last engagement of the Ever Victorious Army. The force was not requested by the imperialists for the siege of Nanking. Instead it was decided by Gordon and Li immediately after Ch'ang-chou to disband most of the force and reassign certain units to Li's forces. Most of the infantry was simply disbanded.¹² But 450 were brought down to Shanghai and transferred to Cardew's Battalion (the Kinglsey Regiment) to bring that force up to a strength of 1,000. Three hundred of the infantry under the command of Li Hêng-sung and one foreign officer were temporarily retained at K'un-shan to garrison that place. They were classified as Li's troops. The artillery corps were retained by Li for transfer to Nanking. However, it had shrunk to a fraction of its original size. Out of 600 men only 140 volunteered to serve Li. By mid-June this number had shrunk to 90, supplemented by 200 new and untrained recruits. Eleven foreigners, including the commander, Colonel Doyle, remained with the artillery corps. The gunboat Hyson and its foreign officers were also retained. All surplus arms and munitions were turned over to Li. According to Gordon the disbandment and reassignment of the Ever Victorious Army was completed by June. 1.¹³

With the rebellion close to suppression, it would be natural for Li to want the expensive Ever Victorious Army disbanded. As for not taking part in the capture of Nanking, the climax of fourteen years of war, Gordon stated in April his opinion that:

The Imperialists do not want us to go there as they feel sure of taking it in time and feel a sort of shame to let us go and capture the city before which they have been so long. For my part I do not want to go, although the capture would be easy but there are

¹²WO 107/5/Part 3, June 11, 1864, Hong Kong, no foliation; FO 228/367, Parkes to Bruce, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 241-247; FO 228/367, Parkes to Russell, June 21, 1864, folios 303-310; and, Chang, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, June 5, 1864, pp. 134-137.

¹³Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, p. 79.

so many Imperialists, that my small force would be swamped, and should Tien Wang offer to surrender to my Force, I should be obliged to refuse to listen, and perhaps be the unwilling [participant]. . . of a massacre.¹⁴

But in reality, it is doubtful that by May the Ever Victorious Army was capable of fighting any further serious engagements. During its brief period of activity in 1864, the force had suffered several very serious defeats. According to Li, this decline in the ability of the force was due to the gradual change in the composition of the force while under Gordon's command.

During this time a large number of the old soldiers deserted tired by their long service and the bravest of the force was disabled by death or wounds and as the vacancies have been supplied in many cases by rebels who had newly come over the force could not be expected to perform so well in future should it be necessary to employ it.¹⁵

Gordon and Li began to lose confidence in the force, which from early March to its disbandment seemed quite unable to win a victory. Li wrote of this situation:

Since this spring he [Gordon] has been defeated twice at Chin-t'an and Yang-k'u respectively. Gordon has felt rather discouraged. On the 22nd day of the 3rd month [April 27], in the campaign of Ch'ang-chou, even when the city walls had been blown up, it was still not possible to effect an entry. Thus Gordon saw that the Ever-Victorious Army was of no use. On the 6th of the 4th month [May 11], when assaulting the city for the second time, Gordon immediately asked that our troops should be employed as vanguard, and the Ever-Victorious Army as rearguard, for he himself realized that his men were not so serviceable as our armies.¹⁶

No doubt there is a certain degree of exaggeration in this to the favour of Li, but even Gordon admitted in June a sharp decline in the ability and morale of his force by the time of the fall of Ch'ang-chou.¹⁷

¹⁴BM 33222, Charles Gordon to Henry Gordon, Ch'ang-chou, April 18, 1864, folios 38-41; also see FO 17/408, Gordon to Bruce, April 9, 1864, folios 87-88.

¹⁵FO 228/367, Li Hung-chang to Parkes, May 23, 1864, folios 248-251. Also see FO 17/408, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, translated by Alabaster, folios 282-285.

¹⁶Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, June 5, 1864, pp. 134-137.

¹⁷FO 17/410, Memorandum of the reasons which led to the dissolution of the Disciplined Chinese, Gordon, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 60-64.

Related to this decline in the combat effectiveness of the Ever Victorious Army was Gordon's own attitude to his work. During the 1864 period, he does not exhibit the same enthusiasm for his work that characterized the first months of his service with the force. In April of 1864, he confessed to Sir Harry Parkes, British Consul at Shanghai, that he was "weary" of his position, which he described as not being "a feather bed."¹⁸ He expressed similar sentiments to Li, stating his desire to return to England.¹⁹ Li hints that Gordon's personal disenchantment with his work accelerated the decision to terminate the work of the force.

The other reason for the disbandment of the Ever Victorious Army, and the one that Gordon felt to be the prime reason, was the long standing problem of its officers.²⁰ Their questionable loyalty and insubordinate behaviour had plagued Gordon throughout his period of command. As has been noted, the behaviour of the force's officers was the principal reason why Li requested a British officer to command the force and why Gordon resumed active service in 1864. While commanding the force, Gordon had been presented by his officers with a series of crises. Mass resignations, refusals to obey orders, and officer engineered mutinies were frequent events. The very loyalty of these officers was questionable.

. . . the troubles arising from a few illiterate uneducated men have not been few. Being in command of Regiments and therefore in positions of power they had their admirers and satellites who raised their ideas of themselves to the highest pitch and no one can imagine the assumptions and vanity which these men possessed and which after Soochow were most difficult to curb. Mixing intimately with the other officers they would talk themselves into the execution of almost anything. . . . they had all the power of misleading the men who knew that my sentiments were not like Ward's (antagonistic to the Mandarin) the officers have used this means of coercion towards me two or three times,²¹

¹⁸BM 39109, Gordon to Parkes, April 4, 1864, folios 198-203.

¹⁹FO 228/367, Li Hung-chang to Parkes, May 23, 1864, folios 248-251.

²⁰FO 17/410, Memorandum of the reasons which led to the dissolution of the Disciplined Chinese, Gordon, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 60-64.

²¹Ibid., folios 60-64.

Gordon found it impossible to dismiss these men and replace them with officers of a better class. British officers were not eager to serve with the force, which, according to Gordon, was viewed with some distaste.

Officers of our Army hold aloof. I cannot in my conscience recommend them to join such a dangerous service with such associates²²

At the time of disbandment, Gordon had only two British army officers with him, Captain Brown, who acted as Gordon's aide de camp, but was then wounded, and Dr. Moffit, the only medical officer with the force.²³

This force has had ever since its formation in its ranks, a class of men of no position but who having joined the Force at the commencement of its existence could not have been removed from it without danger and in some cases without injustice; they held the principal posts such as the commanders of the Infantry Regiments and Artillery and thus by their presence quite barred the way against the entry of a more educated class of men; On taking the command it would have been quite impossible to have removed them without breaking up the Force entirely and there then were none of a better class to replace them: the close proximity of the Rebels and the fact that these officers had been engaged by an American [Ward] would be sufficient reason for not breaking up the force and reconstructing it, which no doubt was the best course to have pursued if free from these disadvantages.

The Force therefore was not changed in its organization during the term I held the command and I have had the disadvantages of the errors of construction to contend with the whole time.²⁴

Gordon managed to control his officers, but his hold was a tenuous one. It was only by keeping the force occupied with fighting the rebels, by keeping constant watch on his officers and by fostering disunion among the officers, that Gordon was able to command.

It was one continued series of manoeuvres between me and the commanding officers for the upper hand, which however I managed to keep only at the cost of never leaving my post.²⁵

²²BM 39109, Gordon to Parkes, April 4, 1864, folios 198-203.

²³BM 39109, Parkes to Layard, Shanghai, May 5, 1864, folios 17-18.

²⁴FO 17/410, Memorandum of the reasons which led to the dissolution of the Disciplined Chinese, Gordon, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 60-64.

²⁵Ibid., folios 60-64.

With this officer problem Gordon felt that the Ever Victorious Army would be a most difficult and dangerous force to maintain once the Taipings were suppressed.²⁶ The difficulty was how to disband the force, a move which would be opposed by many within the force.

Happily the opportunity arrived once and I took advantage of it. After the fall of Changchufu both men and officers were quite fagged out and sick of the Service. They had both suffered very heavily and having seen the Imperialists acting with vigor lost for a short time the idea that they were such splendid troops without whom the Empire would collapse. The Futai disgusted with the conduct of some of the officers and by the hanging back of the men at the unsuccessful attack was willing to pay \$100,000 for their disbandment, and as the time which existed in the force which is mentioned above was only transient, it was necessary to take immediate action as otherwise both officers and men might refuse to leave.²⁷

Having bribed the senior officers of the force sufficiently, they held their subordinate officers in check and the force was disbanded with a minimum of danger and difficulty.

It is difficult to establish an actual date when Gordon and Li reached some form of agreement about disbanding the force. As has been pointed out, Li had considered the disbanding of the force on several occasions, especially following the Soochow affair.²⁸ Up to this point he had been held in check by either Peking, the British or the Taipings. Gordon made it known in early April and again in early May that he planned to disband it sometime after the taking of Ch'ang-chou.²⁹ This was well within the policy outlined by Bruce, that the disbandment of the force should occur when the tranquility of the area had been sufficiently restored to allow for its dissolution.³⁰

²⁶Ibid., folios 60-64.

²⁷Ibid., folios 60-64.

²⁸For examples, see Cheng, Chinese Sources, pp. 108, 129, 130.

²⁹For example, FO 17/408, Gordon to Bruce, April 9, 1864, folios 87-88; and, Gordon to Parkes, May 4, 1864, as cited in Stanley Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Henry Parkes, (London: Macmillan & Co., 1894), I, 494.

³⁰For example, see, BPP, 1864, Vol. LXIII, "Correspondence Relative to Lieut-Col. Gordon's Position," Bruce to Russell, March 18, 1864, p. 447.

What Gordon needed was an opportunity and when it was presented at Ch'ang-chou, he requested Li's permission to disband the force immediately. But the decision for an immediate disbandment was made without reference to Gordon's superiors.

Since I took the command this opportunity had never presented itself until this time. To have waited and discussed the question would have thrown the onus of the dissolution of an American force on our Government, by acting on my own responsibility, the field is now clear for any arrangements that may be considered necessary. I consider the Force even under any British officer a most dangerous collection of men never to be depended on and very expensive.³¹

The next day, May 12, this decision was communicated to Gordon's superior in Shanghai, Colonel Hough.³²

The proposed disbandment of the force was not received favourably by Sir Harry Parkes, the British Consul at Shanghai. On May 4, Gordon had asked for Parkes' advice on the disbandment of the force.³³ In his reply, Parkes viewed the force as essential to the defense of Shanghai, which he considered to be insecure until the Taipings were completely crushed.³⁴ Despite its shortcomings, Parkes was ". . . afraid to recommend the dissolution of the Force, for I have no faith in the Imperialists keeping matters straight when once made smooth for them;" He expressed relief in hearing Gordon say that he would ". . . act deliberately, cautiously, in respect to the breaking up of the Force." Parkes further suggested that nothing be done until Gordon had consulted with Bruce, who would be passing through Shanghai in the middle of June. Unfortunately for Parkes, these words of caution reached Gordon too late to alter the completely opposite course of action.

³¹FO 17/410, Memorandum of the reasons which led to the dissolution of the Disciplined Chinese, Gordon, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 60-64.

³²FO 17/408, Brown (Gordon's A.D.C.) to Hough, Ch'ang-chou, May 12, 1864, folios 277-280.

³³Gordon to Parkes, May 4, 1864, as cited in Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 494.

³⁴Parkes to Gordon, Shanghai, May 11, 1864, as cited in Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 494-496.

Parkes immediately protested the disbandment of the force to both Gordon and Li.³⁵ He reminded them that by the agreement of January 1863, no change could occur in the status of the force without the prior knowledge and consent of the British military commander in China, and that so long as there were any rebels in arms the Ever Victorious Army should be maintained as part of the garrison of Shanghai, its original purpose. Parkes expressed the opinion that the Chinese forces under Li's command were still too inefficient and incompetent to replace the small British and French garrison at Shanghai, soon to be withdrawn.

. . . [and] after all the cost and inconvenience incurred by H.M.'s Government in defending Shanghai for four years they may naturally require in order to avoid a recurrence of this trouble [the continual insecurity of Shanghai], that the native force which relieves them of the charge of the place should possess an organization and character that will attract their confidence.³⁶

Parkes had the support of General Brown in this affair. Brown wrote:

I am not for disbanding any portion of the Disciplined Force until we see the fate of Nanking and the retreat of the rebels. I am also for keeping up a corps of disciplined Chinese at Shanghai. . . . It is a great strategical point and should be made the place of a regular cantonment.³⁷

Parkes' protest caused a rift between Gordon and Li over the disbandment of the Ever Victorious Army. It was with some difficulty that Gordon was kept convinced of the necessity of disbanding the force.

. . . Your official [Li] received on the 15th day [May 20] a request from Harry Parkes that the matter of disbanding the Ever-Victorious Army should be made known to the British authorities in Shanghai, and reported in turn to the [British] Minister in the capital for decision. Furthermore, Hart also wrote that, although the province of Kiangsu was cleared, the brigands both in Chin-ling and in Huchow might flee and present a danger elsewhere. He then cited the situation before the 10th year of the Hsien-feng [1860] as a warning, firmly held that the Ever-Victorious Army should not

³⁵FO 228/367, Parkes to Li Hung-chang, Shanghai, May 18, 1864, folios 200-203; FO 228/367, Parkes to Gordon, Shanghai, May 19, 1864, folios 207-211; and, FO 228/367, Parkes to Li Hung-chang, June 1, 1864, folios 256-263.

³⁶FO 228/367, Parkes to Gordon, Shanghai, May 19, 1864, folios 207-211.

³⁷As cited in Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 498.

be quickly disbanded, and illustrated his case by many instances. Gordon seemed moved by this. When Ting Jih-ch'ang [assisting in the disbandment of the force] and others repeatedly gave him orders he at once obeyed and then as abruptly defied them, and wished to adopt the suggestion of both Parkes and Hart to retain six hundred artillery men and more than one thousand musketeers. In further conversation Ting Jih-ch'ang added: "Since you have assisted China in the pacification of the rebellion there is no better time than now to disband your force, return victoriously to your country and enjoy a good name both here and abroad. If a future commander should be as insubordinate as Burgevine and his like would not your reputation be affected? As Harry Parkes and Hart are laymen they think that the Ever-Victorious Army is very reliable, and are thus unwilling to disband it quickly. Why do you not state the true facts of this Army's incompetence in order to justify yourself, lest your own reputation should be dragged down by others?" Gordon was deeply impressed. . . .³⁸

It was Gordon who brought forth the first suggested alternative to the retention of the Ever Victorious Army for the garrisoning of Shanghai. On May 17, he wrote Parkes a memorandum on the possible arrangements that could be made for the retention of a Chinese force at Shanghai.³⁹ In it he suggested a force of 1,000 men should be maintained at Shanghai, made up primarily from Cardew's Battalion and the pick of the infantry of the Ever Victorious Army. Officers of the force would be a few reliable men from the Ever Victorious Army and non-commissioned officers from the regular British forces. Gordon made this suggestion without reference to Li, but thought the measure " . . . one which I have no doubt the Fu-tai would accede to willingly."⁴⁰ The proposal was adopted, at least for a short time, but for some reason that is not made clear the force was disbanded within a few months. At the time though, the force would appear not to have been sufficient to satisfy Parkes' demands.

On May 22, Gordon went up to Shanghai from K'un-shan to

³⁸Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, June 5, 1864, pp. 134-137.

³⁹FO 228/367, Memorandum on the nucleus of a Chinese Force which it would be advisable to retain at Shanghai, Gordon, May 17, 1864, folios 213-214; and Gordon to Parkes, May 17, 1864, as cited in Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 496-497.

⁴⁰Gordon to Parkes, May 17, 1864, as cited in Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 496-497.

discuss with Parkes the problem of defending Shanghai.⁴¹ Following this conference, Parkes and Gordon put forth new proposals as to the nature of the Chinese force for Shanghai.⁴² Parkes was made to see the inadvisability of retaining the Ever Victorious Army as a garrison for Shanghai. It was suggested instead that there be formed an entirely new and permanent force of 3,000 men under Chinese officers, but instructed by British or foreign soldiers. The new force would serve to protect Shanghai, but it represented something else as well. It was definitely a return to the earlier projects to reconstitute the Chinese armed forces, by forming and training the nucleus of a modern regular army. Gordon suggested that:

If it is possible, let our suggestions be as agreeable as it is possible to make them with efficiency; do not let us try to govern their men by Foreigners but keeping these latter as instructors make their own officers. Taking their military code and organization let us endeavour to alter it to just a better state of organization. I would also say that the trial should be on a small scale at first. Some three thousand men, to be increased here after and perhaps copied at Hankow and Ningpo.⁴³

Gordon's participation in the formulation of this new proposal and his subsequent support for it was in complete contrast to the views he expressed a few weeks previously. Writing to Bruce on the advisability of disbanding all foreign officered Chinese forces, Gordon noted:

Thus all these forces will be got rid of, and the Imperialists left to themselves. To attempt to persuade them to remodel their army or armies would be useless and it would be a waste of time to attempt it. The Mandarin troops are no longer the rabble they were: they are most formidable as irregulars, make stockades quicker than other people, and are never disheartened for long.⁴⁴

However, when Gordon expressed this faith in the Chinese army to Parkes,

⁴¹Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, June 5, 1864, pp. 134-137; and, Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 498.

⁴²FO 228/367, Parkes to Li Hung-chang, Shanghai, June 1, 1864, folios 256-263; and, FO 17/410, Memorandum of the reasons which led to the dissolution of the Disciplined Chinese, Gordon, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 60-64.

⁴³FO 17/410, Memorandum of the reasons which led to the dissolution of the Disciplined Chinese, Gordon, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 60-64.

⁴⁴FO 17/408, Gordon to Bruce, April 9, 1864, folios 87-88.

Parkes was not inclined to share Gordon's confidence. Parkes viewed any improvement in Li's forces as only " . . . temporary in its character and limited in its extent."⁴⁵ No doubt it was pressure from Parkes that forced Gordon into this completely contradictory position.

Meanwhile, Li had replied to Parkes' initial complaint on the disbandment of the force.⁴⁶ Writing in a most conciliatory manner Li apologized for not informing Parkes in advance of the plans for the Ever Victorious Army, but cited the press of business and the distance as the reasons that prevented him from doing so. Li informed Parkes that the decision to reduce the force (he refused to describe it as a disbandment) was " . . . a felicitous idea of Colonel Gordon's and not an underhand project of mine." Li assured Parkes that Shanghai was now completely safe from rebel attack and refused to consider the retention of the Ever Victorious Army for the garrisoning of Shanghai. According to Li, Shanghai was adequately defended by imperial troops.

. . . [as] the country is held by first class troops you will have I think little cause for apprehension and it certainly appears to me that the measures that you say in your letter should be taken to ensure the future safety, peace and tranquility of Shanghai may be seen in operation and it would be taking a very one sided view to say that Gordon's force is the only one on which reliance could be placed and that the tens of thousands of tried Imperial troops are not sufficient.⁴⁷

Attempting to strangle Parkes' demands with his own red tape, Li pointed out that with the revocation of the Orders in Council, about which Li had read in the newspapers, it would be impossible for the British authorities to act in defiance of it. " . . . and if Gordon wishes to reduce the Force it is impossible for one to insist on retaining it and force British officers to command it."⁴⁸ But Li did express a willingness to consult further with Parkes on the security of Shanghai.

⁴⁵FO 228/367, Parkes to Bruce, Shanghai, May 21, 1864, folios 192-199.

⁴⁶FO 228/367, Li Hung-chang to Parkes, May 23, 1864, folios 248-251.

⁴⁷Ibid., folios 248-251.

⁴⁸Ibid., folios 248-251.

In his reply to Li, Parkes noted Li's claim that there were 50,000 well trained men stationed in the country about Shanghai. Tongue in cheek, he challenged Li:

I regard this as a very important announcement for if these corps be really efficient their rapid organization reflects the highest credit on Y.E.'s administration, and in the interest of the Chinese Government it is of the first importance that the fact should be established on undoubted testimony. I conclude it would be a satisfaction to Y.E. to have these troops formally inspected by officers who are competent to judge of their merits.⁴⁹

Parkes pressed on Li his ideas of " . . . a well considered system of instruction and exercise combining the advantages of foreign science with a due regard for the circumstances of the men and country" Only in this manner Parkes told Li could Li's 50,000 men be prevented from becoming " . . . as useless as the former fifty thousand . . . who only two short years ago could not strike a single blow in the defense of the single city of Shanghai."

In early June Parkes visited Li at Soochow to press for the acceptance of his new proposal. Parkes describing his conversation with Li, wrote:

Our conversation turned chiefly on the present condition of the military forces of the Province, and while I admitted that these might be in some degree superior to the wholly inexperienced troops of former days, there was reasons to believe I added that in point of organization, discipline and professional knowledge they continued far too deficient to be relied on as a secure and permanent protection for Shanghai and the Province of Kiangsoo. The weak point in their system I urged was the want of intelligent and properly qualified native officers, and I observed that notwithstanding their opportunities no appreciable number of the military mandarins had yet evinced any wish to make themselves acquainted with Western Science and tactics.⁵⁰

According to Parkes, at the time Li made no comment on these observations. However, we know that as Li, seeing no military reason for the project, viewed Parkes' intentions as " . . . nothing else than to control our military régime and to waste our wealth and energy."⁵¹

⁴⁹FO 228/367, Parkes to Li Hung-chang, Shanghai, June 1, 1864, folios 256-263.

⁵⁰FO 228/367, Parkes to Russell, Shanghai, June 21, 1864, folios 303-310.

⁵¹Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, June 5, 1864, pp. 134-137.

However, when Parkes returned to Soochow a few days later, Li admitted the necessity of reorganizing and properly training both officers and men. " . . . and he expressed his willingness to form a camp of instruction for these purposes if H.M.'s Government would lend suitable officers at a point within the thirty mile radius."⁵² Li agreed to lend 4,000 men for purposes of instruction.

One of the reasons why Li agreed to this continued British involvement in Chinese military affairs can be traced to the artillery corps from the then disbanded Ever Victorious Army. When it was decided to disband the Ever Victorious Army, Li was anxious to retain the artillery corps and to reassign it to Tsêng Kuo-fan at Nanking. It was essential for the corps to be effective that it retain some of its foreign officers as gunners and instructors. However, as all of these officers were British subjects Gordon could not allow them to continue to serve without permission from the British authorities.⁵³ Parkes refused to grant this permission because of the repeal of the Orders in Council and referred the question to Bruce.⁵⁴ This was very inconvenient to Li, who would appear to have already promised the artillery along with other units to Tsêng and was having a variety of difficulties in transferring these units to Nanking.⁵⁵ Further, because the artillery corps was in a state of limbo with regard to its future, there were increasing problems in keeping the men from resigning or deserting.⁵⁶ Li wanted the use of these foreign officers only for a

⁵²FO 228/367, Parkes to Russell, Shanghai, June 21, 1864, folios 303-310.

⁵³FO 228/367, Gordon to Parkes, K'un-shan, May 17, 1864, folios 185-186; and, FO 228/367, Gordon to Parkes, K'un-shan, May 17, 1864, folio 187.

⁵⁴FO 228/367, Parkes to Gordon, Shanghai, May 21, 1864, folios 190-191; FO 228/367, Parkes to Li Hung-chang, Shanghai, June 1, 1864, folios 256-263; FO 228/367, Parkes to Li Hung-chang, Shanghai, June 2, 1864, folios 268-269; and, FO 228/367, Parkes to Bruce, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 241-247.

⁵⁵Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorials from Li Hung-chang, June 20, 1864, and July 3, 1864; and Li Hung-chang to Tsêng Kuo-ch'üan, July 20, 1864, pp. 137-138.

⁵⁶FO 228/367, Parkes to Russell, Shanghai, June 21, 1864, folios 303-310; and, FO 228/367, Parkes to Bruce, Shanghai, June 6, 1864, folios 241-247.

few weeks, until Nanking fell, and this delay rendered their period of usefulness shorter with each passing day. Wade suggested to Parkes that he allow some British gunners to remain in Li's service, but ". . . I think that the condition of this concession on the part of H.M. Govt. should be the adherence of Gov. Li to the project of military organization" ⁵⁷ It is difficult to say whether Parkes received these instructions before visiting Li at Soochow, but the sequence of events would seem to intimate this. It was after Parkes agreed to the service of the gunners, that Li agreed to the formation of an instruction camp. ⁵⁸

The proposed instruction camp received the full support of Bruce, who was then retiring from his position as British minister to Peking.

The Governor of Kiangsoo, Li, has applied for British officers as instructors. I hope he will be assisted, for a small local force acting as a garrison will secure the external and internal tranquility of Shanghae, will enable H.M. Govt. to withdraw its troops, and will not lead to dangerous consequences. It will be a useful check on disorderly bands, whether of insurgents or 'braves'. ⁵⁹

Wade, who represented Britain in the interim between Bruce's retirement and Sir Rutherford Alcock's appointment, also approved of the project. ⁶⁰

The British officer selected to supervise the instruction camp was, not surprisingly, Gordon. Although he had been anxious to return to England, he was persuaded by Bruce, Brown and Parkes to remain and take charge of the project. ⁶¹ Parkes wrote:

⁵⁷FO 228/366, Wade to Parkes no place, no date, no foliation.

⁵⁸FO 228/367, Parkes to Russell, Shanghai, June 21, 1864, folios 303-310.

⁵⁹FO 17/410, Bruce to Russell, London, August 31, 1864, folios 58-59.

⁶⁰FO 228/366, Wade to Parkes, no place, no date, no foliation; and, FO 228/366, Wade to Parkes, December 31, 1864, no foliation.

⁶¹FO 17/410, Bruce to Russell, London, August 31, 1864, folios 58-59; Parkes to Mrs. Parkes, Shanghai, June 21 and July 3, 1864, as cited in Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 498-500; and, FO 228/368, Brown to Parkes, Shanghai, October 3, 1864, folios 145-147.

It happens to be one that few officers are competent to undertake, and Gordon - much to his own annoyance - has volunteered for the work rather than let the measure fall through. All perhaps that will be required is that he should start the thing, and then some fitting officer may be found to take it off his hands, as he is very anxious to get away.⁶²

The place selected for the training camp was Fêng-huang-shan, a secluded site to the south of Soochow and about forty miles from Shanghai.⁶³ The first detachment of Chinese troops, 800 ex-rebels who had surrendered a few weeks earlier arrived there sometime in July or August with their British instructors. Later on more Chinese troops joined the camp, including the remnants of the artillery corps of the Ever Victorious Army.

Drill and instruction were provided by British and ex-British officers and non-commissioned officers.⁶⁴ Initially, these instructors probably numbered no more than three or four, including Gordon.⁶⁵ An interesting feature of this instruction was that drilling in the English language, as had been practiced in previous disciplined corps, ceased and was replaced by Chinese. After considerable modification English drill books for artillery and infantry were translated into Chinese by H.E. Hobson and Gordon. F.L. Story, one of the original instructors, described this new method:

At first the process of drilling in Chinese was slow and trying. I will relate what would occur. The English officer would come on to parade with his interpreter, to him in English he would explain the movement he wanted done. The interpreter in turn would explain it in Chinese to the parade, the English officer would then give the executive word of command in Anglicised Chinese, with a ludicrous want of pronunciation and accent, this would cause a titter, for no one understood it and no one would move, and so the parade would go on at times ad nauseam, but with practice our pronunciation improved, and the troops got to drill fairly well.⁶⁶

⁶²Parkes to Mrs. Parkes, Shanghai, July 3, 1864, as cited in Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 500.

⁶³(F.L. Story), "Reminiscences," in A. Egmont Hake, Events in the Taiping Rebellion (London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1891), p. 515.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 473 and 516; and, Cordier, Histoire des Relations de la Chine avec les Puissances Occidentales, 1860-1900, I, 247-248.

⁶⁵FO 228/368, Li Hung-chang to Parkes, folios 292-297.

⁶⁶Story, "Reminiscences," in Hake, Events in the Taiping Rebellion, p. 519.

The camp was established with a sense of optimism as to the changes it could wrought in the Chinese military establishment. As F.L. Story noted:

. . . Fung-when-shan was to be the Aldershot of China; imperial Chinese troops were to be brought there from time to time, placed under British tuition and discipline, and then drafted for fresh troops to go through the same instruction. I should add that it was hoped that the sons of Chinese gentlemen would join the new force as officers, the general position of officers of the Chinese imperial troops being very low;⁶⁷

But by September the first of a series of notes of complaint and disappointment were being registered by the British.⁶⁸ It was commonly agreed that the camp had to be put on a better and more permanent footing if it was to provide even a sufficient defense for Shanghai, let alone the nucleus for the formation of a regular army. The basic complaint was that Li was not seriously interested in the camp. As a result the troops stationed there were of low quality and not of sufficient strength to make the project worthwhile. Gordon felt the camp had the potential of producing a force of 10,000 men able to serve wherever needed in the empire. He estimated the camp could produce 3,000 trained men every year to year and a half. But to achieve this goal the present strength of the force would have to be raised to at least 3,000. The Chinese officers appointed to the camp, including the senior Chinese officers, were of extremely low rank and low quality, as well as being extremely corrupt with the pay of the force. There was no attempt on the part of the Chinese to use the camp to train their officers in modern military methods. Further, there was no agreement with Li that guaranteed the existence of the camp or provided security of tenure for the instructors. Gordon suggested guaranteed

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 517.

⁶⁸FO 228/368, Gordon to Brown, Fêng-huang-shan, September 18, 1864, folios 149-153; FO 228/368, Brown to Parkes, Shanghai, October 3, 1864, folios 145-147; FO 228/368, Parkes to Li Hung-chang, Shanghai, October 15, 1864, folios 276-278; FO 228/368, Parkes to Li Hung-chang, Shanghai, October 21, 1864, folios 282-285; and, FO 228/368, Gordon to Li Hung-chang, folios 288-289.

employment for all ranks, including instructors, for at least three years. He further suggested that Li apply for six additional instructors from the British army.

Li also had his complaints about the training camp.⁶⁹ He disliked this continued involvement by the British in Chinese military affairs when there was clearly no threat to Shanghai. Specifically at Fêng-huang-shan, he objected to the British instructors becoming involved in facets of the camp's administration other than drill and instruction.⁷⁰ He demanded that henceforth the instructors

. . . are to assist in the work of instruction and drill, and that the Chinese officer in supreme command of the Camp shall have sole charge of the maintenance of discipline and order therein and of the Commissariat and other miscellaneous duties,⁷¹

Guaranteed this, Li agreed to hire six additional instructors for one year and to increase the camp to 1,000 men. He further agreed to the appointment of an officer of high rank and adequate military background to the position of the camp's commander. The man he selected was an officer named P'an Ting-hsin, who had served on Li's staff for several years. P'an was also commander of 5,000 troops stationed near Fêng-huang-shan. According to Li, P'an was free to send his own men to Fêng-huang-shan in rotation to be drilled.

Like so many of the previous forces and instruction programmes, Fêng-huang-shan was in effect under regional control. This fact was readily recognized by the British.⁷² It was felt necessary that

⁶⁹FO 228/368, Li Hung-chang to Parkes, November 3, 1864, folios 290-291; and FO 228/368, Li Hung-chang to Parkes, November 3, 1864, folios 292-297.

⁷⁰We know from F.L. Story that the instructors interfered with the pay arrangements of the force in order to prevent the practice of "squeezing." Also Story, with Gordon's cognizance, ordered the flogging of Chinese soldiers for disobedience and insubordination. Story, "Reminiscences," in Hake, Events in the Taiping Rebellion, pp. 516-519.

⁷¹FO 228/368, Li Hung-chang to Parkes, November 3, 1864 folios 292-297.

⁷²FO 228/368, Parkes to Wade, Shanghai, October 12, 1864, folio 143; FO 228/368, Brown to Parkes, Shanghai, October 3, 1864, folios 145-147; and FO 228/368, Gordon to Brown, Fêng-huang-shan, September 18, 1864, folios 149-153.

the force should have the recognition and support of the central government, as otherwise the force would have only "feeble and precarious" local support and be exposed to the whim of each new governor. Neither could it hope to influence the modernization of the Chinese armed forces on a national scale by remaining only a provincially recognized project. It was suggested that the force be divested as far as possible of its provincial character, for example by having its financial support come directly from Peking. Otherwise, as Brown pointed out, it would languish as ". . . a costly and useless toy."

However, the attitude of Peking towards a project like Fêng-huang-shan was not entirely one of favour. In mid-June, before the establishment of the camp, Bruce had a conference with Wên-hsiang of the Tsung-li yamen on the military situation in China. As was usual with Bruce, he suggested the garrisoning of important and vulnerable cities with reliable and sufficient forces.

The importance of this suggestion he [Wên-hsiang] seemed fully to appreciate, and he then stated frankly that he was desirous to hold these places with Manchoos and that he did not wish to see the Chinese population initiated in foreign discipline and the use of foreign arms. I believe this to be one of the reasons why the government has been so luke-warm about the formation of disciplined Chinese troops at the ports. They foresee considerable difficulty in disposing of the provincial levies which have been called out to make head against the insurrection and this apprehension of the danger of these men turning against the government is one of the reasons which confirms me in the opinion that we have nothing to fear from any aggressive policy on the part of the Manchoo government He is anxious, I see, to prevent the formation of Chinese artillery-men.⁷³

This statement is especially interesting when one notes that at Canton, where the British still carried on a small training scheme with the approval of Peking, both Chinese and Manchu troops were trained. But, it was only the Manchus who received artillery training.⁷⁴

For the defense of Shanghai, Wên-hsiang evinced a desire to keep disciplined Chinese troops out of the complete control of Li.⁷⁵

⁷³FO 17/408, Bruce to Russell, Peking, June 12, 1864, folios 378-389.

⁷⁴FO 17/409, Robertson to Bruce, Canton, May 13, 1864, folios 56-59.

⁷⁵FO 17/408, Bruce to Russell, Peking, June 12, 1864, folios 378-389.

He proposed keeping together 1,000 to 1,500 infantry and the entire artillery corps of the Ever Victorious Army for the defense of Shanghai. The force would be under "reliable" foreign officers, preferably English. Perhaps this was an attempt on the part of the Manchus to make use of a foreign presence as a counterbalance to the Chinese (e.g. Li's) control of the armed forces around Shanghai.

In late November, Wade in Peking communicated specific instructions to Parkes concerning Fêng-huang-shan.⁷⁶ Wade pointed out that Britain was still very anxious to encourage military improvement on the part of China and to ensure the security of Shanghai.

But H.M.'s Govmnt. would not wish to see any Provincial Governor pressed by us into the adoption of measures that might embarrass the Central Govmnt., such for instance as the formation of a large army or fleet at a distance from the Capital. You must be very cautious, therefore, as to the extent of the undertaking in which you urge H. Ex. Li or any other high provincial to embark as necessary.⁷⁷

Wade suggested that no more than 3,000 men be placed in the camp for the defense of Shanghai and with the hope that:

. . . the success of the experiment at Shanghai would lead to its adoption at other ports, and because it is only by the adoption of this and similar measures at the ports, that China can hope to preserve her independence of foreign nations. At present she is relying almost exclusively upon strength not her own, and experience has taught us that no government can continue beholden to a foreign power for aid in the settlement of domestic troubles, without eventually becoming the dependant if not the vassal of its foreign auxiliary. H.M.'s Govnt. would be seriously concerned were it to feel that such a fate were impending over this country, and that such will be the fate of China unless she addresses herself earnestly to the protection of the ports, no one acquainted with the circumstances of her present condition can dispute.⁷⁸

These words are identical to what was being said by Bruce early in 1863 in regard to the proposed Tientsin project. And they had been expressed by Bruce and others in regard to the other projects previous to Fêng-huang-shan. But like its predecessors, Fêng-huang-shan

⁷⁶FO 228/366, Wade to Parkes, Peking, November 28, 1864, no foliation.

⁷⁷Ibid., no foliation.

⁷⁸FO 228/366, Wade to Parkes, Peking, November 28, 1864, no foliation.

did not provide for any wholesale improvement in the Chinese armed forces.

Surprisingly though, Fêng-huang-shan survived as a distinct camp with a few foreign instructors until at least 1872.⁷⁹ It survived not in spite of, but because of, minimal British control and interference in the force. This was due not only to the new arrangements made for the role of the instructors in November 1864, but it was also due to the physical absence of Fêng-huang-shan's strongest proponents among the British. In late November, Gordon resigned from his position at Fêng-huang-shan and immediately left for England.⁸⁰ According to Parkes, "He had grown tired of his last job of forming a Camp of Instruction, which is far too slow an occupation to be suited to his active and somewhat erratic tastes,"⁸¹ Parkes was transferred to Japan in June 1865.⁸² With the withdrawal of the British troops from Shanghai in mid-1865, Brown's contacts with Shanghai and the camp were broken. In short, Li no longer had to brook the constant interference of these men in his military matters. In addition, with the British interests at Shanghai no longer visibly threatened by the Taipings or similar insurrection subsequent British officials at Shanghai were not as concerned with the defense of the city.

Within the force the British army officers acting as instructors were replaced by men without direct contact with the British government.⁸³ This occurred in mid-1865 with the withdrawal of the

⁷⁹D.C. Boulger, The Life of Sir Halliday Macartney (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1908), p. 146. Cordier, Histoire des Relations de la Chine avec des Puissances Occidentales, I, 248 states that Fêng-huang-shan was disbanded in June 1873 and the foreign instructors dismissed.

⁸⁰FO 228/368, Gordon to Brown, September 18, 1864, folios 148-153; and, Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 501-502.

⁸¹Parkes to Mrs. Parkes, Shanghai, November 20, 1864 as cited in Lane-Poole, The Life of Sir Harry Parkes, I, 501-502.

⁸²Ibid., I, 509-511.

⁸³Boulger, The Life of Sir Halliday Macartney, pp. 146-152. Boulger cites in full a letter from Winstanley to Macartney, Fêng-huang-shan, May 25, 1865.

British army from Shanghai. Major Jebb, 67th Regiment, who had been chief instructor since Gordon's resignation was replaced by William Winstanley. Winstanley was an ex-British soldier who had been with Fêng-huang-shan since its inception and possibly was with the Ever Victorious Army. Winstanley was assisted by a handful of instructors, perhaps no more than two or three. Doyle of the Ever Victorious Army's artillery corps was one.

The Fêng-huang-shan force saw active service from 1866-1869 as part of the army under Li engaged in the suppression of the Nienfei.⁸⁴ But its main value to Li, and perhaps the key to its retention, was that it was able to provide instruction to Li's troops in the use of the artillery being produced by his new arsenals.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 146-152.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been the object of this thesis to examine through the individuals involved, British involvement in the Ever Victorious Army. This involvement becomes a history of differing attitudes, expectations and motivations with resulting personal conflicts and even intrigues. These were not limited to altercations between the British and the Chinese, but split the ranks of both these groups. Bruce, Staveley, Li, Gordon and others all viewed British involvement in Chinese military affairs from different perspectives and strove to institute their ideas and positions. There was at times an almost complete absence of unity of purpose or action. In the last days of the rebellion, while packing his belongings to quit the Ever Victorious Army, Gordon noted this phenomenon.

I have a box full of all sorts of letters from Lay, Osborn, Sir F. Bruce, Wade, Parkes, Burgevine, and mandarins, of the most contradictory nature, the perusal of which will show you how divided the people out here were upon the line of action to be pursued.¹

Bruce held a long term view of British involvement in Chinese military affairs. With justification, Bruce lacked confidence in the Chinese military system to defend British personnel and facilities, to suppress existing internal disorders and to deter possible external aggression in the future. For purposes of improving and safeguarding commercial interests, it was to Britain's advantage that China improve her armed forces. In short, through judiciously directed military assistance, Bruce sought to make China an efficient partner in her own exploitation. To these ends, Bruce gave his constant support to military training schemes, such as the Tientsin-Taku programmes. It was in this light that he viewed British involvement in the Ever Victorious Army. He felt that British military assistance at the treaty ports should be limited to the defense of British installations and the training and equipping of Chinese forces in order to replace the British military presence as rapidly as possible. Further, any assistance in modernizing the Chinese forces should be through the central government and not by

¹As cited in H.W. Gordon, Events in the Life of Charles George Gordon from its Beginning to the End, p. 91.

direct arrangement with local Chinese officials. Bruce recognized the danger of regionalism at a time when most westerners were scarcely aware of its existence, let alone its effects. Bruce believed that to encourage the growth of regional power by strengthening local military power would lead to a fragmentation of China that was not in Britain's interests.

Unfortunately, the British military, especially Staveley and Brown, acted in a manner that was completely contrary to Bruce's concept of the situation. Bruce's broad view of the needs for and method of rebuilding the Chinese military forces was not shared by them with the same degree of enthusiasm or understanding. To the military whose primary concern was the defense of the treaty ports, in particular Shanghai, Bruce's ideas became secondary. They shared Bruce's lack of confidence in the ability of the Chinese armed forces to defend the ports, but were less cautious in seeking a solution to this problem, even to the point of following a policy that was completely contrary to Bruce's. This was evident as early as 1861 with the establishment of the thirty mile defense perimeter around Shanghai, and in 1862 with the active involvement of British forces under Hope and Staveley in that area. When Bruce failed to activate Peking into improving immediately the Chinese military forces at Shanghai as well as the other treaty ports, the British military rapidly and unreservedly entered into local arrangements with interested Chinese officials without concern for regionalism. Under the direction of Staveley, and later Brown, a policy was pursued that placed a British officer, Charles Gordon, in command of a force, the Ever Victorious Army, which was under almost complete regional control.

It was believed by Staveley that only if the force was under the command of a British officer would it be a reliable and adequate alternative to the British military presence at Shanghai. Even Bruce was willing to concede such involvement if the force would allow the extrication of the British forces from their commitment at Shanghai. But, it is important to note that the force never fulfilled this function, which remained of crucial importance until well into 1864. Because of the continued unhealthiness of Shanghai, repeated requests were submitted from the British military in China that the British contingent at

Shanghai be allowed to withdraw.² London refused to sanction such withdrawals because of what they considered to be the continued state of insecurity at Shanghai and the absence of any force to replace the British garrison.³ On March 1, 1864, in the closing days of the Taiping Rebellion, there still remained at Shanghai a force of 1,600 officers and men of the Indian and British armies.⁴ This was out of a total force of 4,629 for all of Japan, China and Hong Kong and does not include the contribution of the Royal Navy, or of the French. The role of a garrison force for the Ever Victorious Army did exist, but the force never filled this role.

The reason why the force never answered this role is simple: Staveley was duped by Li Hung-chang. In his enthusiasm to gain a British foothold in the force and to do something for his brother-in-law, Charles Gordon, Staveley agreed to an arrangement, the sixteen points of January 1863, that placed the Ever Victorious Army under the virtual control of Li. The British commander was recognized as a Chinese officer serving under Li's orders, Li was given financial control of the force, the force was permeated with his agents in the form of the co-commander and officials of key departments, and, it was agreed that the force under its British commander could serve beyond the thirty mile radius. The only power Staveley or his successor, Brown, had was the power to remove

²FO 17/417, W. Home to Assistant Military Secretary at Hong Kong, Principal Medical Officer's Office, no date, folios 330-331; and, FO 17/415, Extract of a letter from General Brown, Hong Kong, December 29, 1863, folio 368.

³FO 17/403, Foreign Office to War Office, Foreign Office, London, September 25, 1863, folio 143; and, FO 17/418, Hammond to War Office, Foreign Office, London, July 6, 1864, folio 25.

⁴FO 17/417, Distribution of the Force in China by the latest return received, dated 1st March, 1864, including officers, folio 25.

The breakdown is as follows:

Hong Kong, Kowloon and Stanley:	2,478
Canton (training camp):	213
Shanghai:	1,600
Taku (training camp):	115
Japan:	<u>223</u>
Total:	4,629

Gordon from his position as commander of the force. But this was not a particularly useful lever, because using it could easily result in the complete loss of all British influence in the force. The very real danger of this possibility can be seen in the events following the Soochow massacre. If Li wanted the force to operate beyond the thirty mile radius and not to garrison Shanghai, there was little the British military could do.

What was Li's attitude towards the Ever Victorious Army and why was he willing to brook the nuisance of British involvement in his military affairs? It does seem likely that he saw some value in the army as a combat force. This is especially true of the force's artillery corps, which was well equipped with modern weapons. In a memorial to the throne, written in September of 1863, Li stated:

The officers and men of the Ever-Victorious Army are not really trustworthy in attack and defense. What they depend on is the considerable number of large and small howitzers on loan to Gordon from the British, and the ammunition and weapons constantly supplied (by the British). So your official is willing to make friends with the British officials, in order to make up what the military strength of China lacks.⁵

Naturally Li would not want this force to be idle in garrison at Shanghai, considering its cost to him and the value of its artillery. In addition, to keep the force in the field would encourage the British to continue maintaining their force at Shanghai at their own cost.

Another reason why Li would want British participation in the force and the reason why he kept the force together at all, is its "Frankenstein" nature. Li did not create the force, but he inherited it with its singular and unpleasant characteristics. To have disbanded the force before the Taipings were crushed would have been disastrous. The hundred odd foreign officers, perhaps with the men and weapons, could have gone over to the rebels. It was far safer to keep the force under a reliable foreign officer, who would have the moral and physical support of the British army, until it could be safely disbanded.

Li had many complaints about and objections concerning disciplined Chinese forces in general and the Ever Victorious Army in

⁵Cheng, Chinese Sources, Memorial from Li Hung-chang, September 14, 1863, pp. 120-121.

particular.⁶ He found them expensive, costing three times more than his regular troops. For his money he had a force that he considered to be

. . . more dangerous than even the rebels, . . . trained under European officers they are studiously taught to despise the mandarins and to consider themselves a foreign force and should the foreign officer in charge incite them to mutiny the Chinese would be utterly powerless to repress them.⁷

Because none of the foreign officers had a knowledge of the language or customs, disciplined forces tended to suffer from an absence of discipline.

. . . the men are utterly beyond their control. They commit every kind of excess and officers . . . are quite unable to investigate the cases even should by accident they come to their notice.⁸

It was for the above reasons, as well as the general dislike of foreign involvement in his affairs and faith in his own system, that Li tended not to encourage the establishment of training programmes of disciplined forces.

Peking's position on British involvement in Chinese military affairs seems on the surface to be ambiguous. But if one views it in the context of Manchu insecurity vis-a-vis the west and the Chinese, it can be seen they were following a fairly definite policy of self-strengthening. Self-strengthening, though, should be defined as Manchu-strengthening. In the first months of 1862, Peking seemed most responsive to Bruce's suggestions for military improvement. The Tientsin-Taku projects were established and were quite successful. However, when Bruce suggested projects for beyond the Peking region, he met with little success. The central government of China was most uncooperative and showed great reluctance to establish training programmes even at the treaty ports. The excuse given by Peking was the shortage of funds, but the reluctance can be interpreted as the realization that to allow

⁶For example, see those listed in FO 228/347, Memorandum relative to the formation of drilled corps of Chinese under European officers, Alabaster, 1863, folios 268-269.

⁷Ibid., folios 268-269.

⁸Ibid., folios 268-269.

foreign involvement in Chinese military affairs would weaken Peking's control in favour of foreign control. But of more immediate concern was the ever-increasing military power under regional (and Chinese) commands. Peking had no desire to encourage the modernization and improvement of forces not fully under their control. This can be seen in the composition (all Manchu or Banner) of the Tientsin-Taku projects, the Shen Chi Ying and the Manchu artillerymen at Canton, but it was never admitted openly by Peking to the British until mid-1864. When faced with the formation or existence of westernized Chinese forces under regional control, Peking encouraged British participation, especially that of Bruce. This can be seen in the establishment of the Kingsley Regiment. Also, for example, at the time of the Soochow massacre affair, when Li threatened to dismiss Gordon and replace him with a more amenable foreigner, Peking ordered Li to retain Gordon. Gordon, and the British presence in general, can be viewed as a counterbalance to the presence of the Chinese.

Perhaps the person to gain the most benefit from the Ever Victorious Army was Charles Gordon. Entering the force as an unknown officer in the Royal Engineers, he left it with some degree of reputation and fame. The Ever Victorious Army formed the springboard to a career that has become legendary. Although it is not the intention of this writer to cast disparagement on the career of Charles Gordon, it can not help but be noted that in his experience with the Ever Victorious Army Gordon has been treated by the contemporary press and subsequent biographers with a favour that can only be termed exaggeration. In assessing Gordon's command of the force, it should be kept in mind that he did not create the force, nor alter its form after his entry. Further, under Gordon, as under its former commanders, the force was not always ever-victorious in the field. Neither was Gordon extremely successful in regard to the maintenance of discipline within his force. He was continually faced with wholesale mutiny and desertion, the ever-ready solution to which was to replace the miscreants with captured rebels or new recruits. Perhaps the most serious criticism that can be levelled against Gordon was his failure to understand the context in which he was working. For example, there is evidence that Gordon did not realize the training role of his force until well after his appointment to its command.⁹ Secondly,

⁹For example, Mossman, Gordon's Diary, p. 158.

when he did realize the importance of remodeling the Chinese armed force, he was adamant in supporting the introduction of such reforms through regional commanders. Writing in mid-1864, he stated:

My idea is, that the change should be made in their army gradually and upon a small scale at first, and through the Futais, and not through the Peking Government, who are a helpless lot.¹⁰

Gordon failed to recognize the dangers of regionalism or even existence of a Manchu-Chinese confrontation. In mid-1864, he was willing to express the opinion that:

The only man I have seen worth anything is the Futai of Kiangsoo, Li, That the execution of the Wangs at Souchow was a breach of faith there is no doubt, but there were many reasons to exculpate the Futai for his action, which was not at all a bad act in the eyes of the Chinese. In my opinion . . . , Li Futai is the best man in the empire; he has correct ideas of his position, and, for a Chinaman has most liberal tendencies. To support him . . . I should say would be the best policy of the Government.¹¹

The only area in which the Ever Victorious Army and the other training projects can be deemed successful in the introduction of western military methods and ideas into China is in demonstrating the value of western weapons.¹² This was especially true of Li Hung-chang, who was so convinced of their value that he established his own arsenals. But this effect was not exclusive to the disciplined forces, as the British and French forces gave the same impression. In the areas of drill, the establishment of a westernized Chinese officers corps and the establishment of corrupt free pay arrangements, the forces had no success that can be deemed permanent or widespread. In fact, in regard to the officer corps, neither the Tientsin-Taku project nor the Ever Victorious Army were successful in training officers of adequate number and quality for their own needs.¹³

¹⁰As cited in H.W. Gordon, Events in the Life of Charles Gordon from its Beginning to the End, p. 89.

¹¹Ibid., p. 87.

¹²Recognition must be made of the existence of another study that deals with some of the material dealt with in this thesis. "The Ever-Victorious Army: Sino-Western cooperation in the Defense of Shanghai Against the Taiping Rebellion " by Lillian M. Li is primarily concerned with the force up to the time of Gordon's appointment. We reach many of the same observations and conclusions, as well as some differences of opinion. However, as Miss Li admits, she was not able to research

This attempt to modernize the Chinese armed forces was a failure. It failed because the British lacked an organized and single-minded policy in presenting their plans to the Chinese. It failed because the Chinese, at both the central and local levels, were not prepared to accept such far-reaching changes. Factors of regionalism and foreign involvement in Chinese affairs played an important role in the Chinese attitude to military reform.

With the suppression of domestic rebellion, the Chinese became less concerned with military reform. The problem of the condition of China's military was regarded once again as vulgar and unimportant, and attention returned to scholarship as the source for China's stability and strength. The Chinese armed force, even the regional militias, deteriorated once more to the poorly paid, poorly led and poorly disciplined rabble so despised by Bruce. Only isolated units, in particular the Shen Chi Ying and the Fêng-huang-shan camp, remained for a few years at least to testify to this period of British assistance in Chinese military improvement.

(Footnote 12 continued). British government and private documents beyond those contained in Parliamentary Papers. Because of this, Miss Li has been limited in her understanding of the development of British policy and the split between Bruce and the British military. Conversely, this writer must acknowledge that Miss Li had access to a few documents in Chinese not consulted in the writing of this thesis. As a result, Miss Li has been able to deal in fuller detail with some aspects on the Chinese side of the topic.

¹³BM 52393, Memo on the composition of the Disciplined Chinese known as the Ever-Victorious Army, Ward's Force and Quinsan Force, folio 26; and, FO 17/423, Wade to Russell, Peking, January 20, 1865, folios 94-98.

APPENDIX I

Arrangements for placing the Ever-Victorious Army under the joint command of Chinese and foreign officers, appointed by his Excellency the Futai and General Staveley, C.B.

1. The Force shall be placed temporarily under the joint command of Captain Holland, and Captain Gordon shall be recommended to Pekin as joint commander, and to regularly enter the Chinese service. The Futai appoints Futsiang Le Heng Sing to the joint command.

2. No expedition shall be undertaken beyond the thirty miles without previous reference to the Allies (England and France), but in reference to sudden expeditions within those limits their consent shall not be required.

3. A Chinese officer, of the 4th or 5th grade, shall be placed under the orders of the joint commanders as provost-marshal, to carry out such punishments as they shall order, who shall always be on the spot; another officer, of equal rank, shall be appointed under their order to superintend the commissariat and pay of the Force, who shall always be on the spot. A third officer shall be appointed to take charge of military stores, who shall report from time to time to the Futai.

4. Three good linguists shall be appointed permanently to the Force.

5. The discipline and internal economy of the Force shall be in the hands of the joint commanders, and they shall be both present in person, or by deputy, at all issues of pay or of rations to the Force.

6. Orders on the Harguan Bank for six months' pay shall be issued every year, payable as due monthly, the amount to be settled when the standing of the Force is arranged.

7. The strength of the Force shall be 3000, but if the custom-house receipts should fail, this number may be eventually reduced.

8. No foreign officer of the Force shall be dismissed without a mixed court of inquiry, the sentence of which must be confirmed by the Futai, and which sentence cannot be reversed without the concurrence of the British General. No officer shall be appointed to the Force by the Chinese Commander without the concurrence of his British colleague.

9. The commanders shall not interfere with civil jurisdiction of Sung-Kiang and its suburbs.

10. The civil authorities shall carry out the wishes of the joint commanders in all matters connected with the defence of the city, but no public works shall be undertaken without their consent.

11. No purchases of arms, ammunition, or military stores of any kind, shall be made without the written consent of the Futai.

12. The British commander shall rank as equal with a Chêntai or Taoutai, and shall be given a proper Chinese designation corresponding thereto, but shall be under the orders of the Futai.

13. The British commander is only to leave the Force (if at his own request) with the consent of the British Commander-in-Chief, obtained and signified through the Consul. If the Chinese are dissatisfied with the commander they shall not dismiss him without a judicial inquiry (in which the Consul shall take part), and due notice must be given.

All subordinate officers are to be appointed at the discretion of the joint commanders, due regard being paid to the 8th Article.

14. That the number of coolies employed by the Force shall be reduced, 100 per 1000 soldiers only being allowed, and their pay put on the footing of those employed in the Futai's camp--viz., 3 dols. per mensem.

15. That the hospital expenses be reduced. The Force to be put, as regards sickness, wounds, &c., on the same footing as other Chinese troops.

16. That the Foreign officers of the force shall receive certain pay, but no extra allowance.

APPENDIX II

A DESCRIPTION OF THE EVER VICTORIOUS ARMY

It may be of value to examine briefly the composition and nature of the Ever Victorious Army during the period it was under the command of Charles Gordon.¹ The following is a look at the organization, equipment, drill and tactics of the force.

Under Gordon, the Ever Victorious Army varied from 3,000 to 5,000 men, organized into infantry and artillery. The infantry composed five to six regiments of a theoretical strength of 537 men each. The variation in the number of regiments is probably due to the inclusion of other smaller disciplined forces, which from time to time served under Gordon.² Each infantry regiment was officered by fifteen foreign officers and forty-two Chinese non-commissioned officers. The regiment was broken down into six companies. Each company was under the command of two foreign officers and seven Chinese non-commissioned officers.

The artillery was organized into six batteries, of which four were siege and two were field. Each battery consisted of a theoretical force of 144 men, including four foreign officers, one foreign sergeant-major and eighteen Chinese non-commissioned officers. The organizational structure of the artillery and infantry existed prior to Gordon's entry into the force.

There also existed a small headquarters staff, which was modelled quite closely on the British army in terms of titles and divisions of duties. Attached to it were those officers and men both foreign and Chinese, who were concerned with the affairs of pay, stores, commissariat, hospital and discipline.

¹This is based on BM 52393, Memo on the composition of the Disciplined Chinese known as the Ever-Victorious Army, Ward's Force and the Quinsan Force, Gordon, folios 26-27; and, Wilson, The Ever-Victorious Army, pp. 128-135. Wilson's information is derived from Gordon's memo.

²For example, the Kingsley Regiment and Macartney's disciplined force served under Gordon on occasion. Also, according to FO 17/407, Narrative of Lieut. Colonel Gordon's Operations from the taking of Liyang on the 9 March (1864) to the 24 March, folios 203-208, Gordon formed an extra regiment from 1,000 captured rebels.

The force was paid monthly by a Chinese official, Kah, in the presence of Gordon, who hoped to prevent "squeezing" and the misappropriation of funds. The method of payment is said to have resembled a pay parade of the British army. Each man came forward individually, stated his name and received his pay. The rate of pay varied from f160 per month for Gordon to f1/17/6 for a Chinese infantry private. The highest rate of pay received by a Chinese soldier was that of the colour-sergeant of an artillery battery, f4/10/0 per month. Excluding that of Gordon, the rate of pay for foreign officers ranged from f20 to f85 per month. Payment was made in Mexican (silver) dollars, of which it was thought f14,000 to f26,000 worth were required each month. According to Gordon's memorandum, the men were never more than ten days in arrears on their pay. In addition to their pay, the men received a daily ration when in the field of two pounds of rice and three quarters of a pound of salt pork or two pounds of salt fish, besides vegetables and oil. The system of bonuses paid to the force for cities captured (f15,000 - f20,000 per city) was discontinued under Gordon's command.

The rate of pay for both the Chinese soldiers and the foreign officers was quite high in comparison to that of other Chinese forces. When Chinese were first used in the force, it was necessary to pay high wages to induce them to serve in such an alien army. But once the force became better known, such high rates were not necessary to attract recruits.

. . . for recruits offered themselves in abundance; but no change in this respect could have been effected without causing delay in the operations, and perhaps danger. It would certainly have caused a revolt, as both officers and men would have been perfectly agreed on this subject; for if the pay of either the officers or of the men had been cut down first, the other section would naturally have³ expected their turn to come next, and would have acted accordingly.

The uniforms of the Chinese soldiers were purposely designed to resemble those of foreign or Indian troops. It consisted of a turban with a European style jacket and pants. Accoutrements were of

³Wilson, The Ever-Victorious Army, p. 129.

British stock. The purpose of this was to make the Taipings think the force was composed of foreigners. Even foreign boots were used in order that their footprints would leave such an impression. There is some evidence that the force was effective in this deception as one of the Taiping chiefs, the Chung Wang, referred to the Ever Victorious Army in his memoirs as ". . . foreign devils in the pay of Li Fu-tai," ⁴

The infantry was armed with a variety of weapons, but all were of foreign origin. Most of the soldiers used the obsolete Tower musket (smooth bore Brown Bess muskets) obtained through Hope. The force had a large store of these weapons, probably around 10,000. One regiment used Prussian rifles of an old pattern that fired conical balls. These rifles were not highly regarded. The elite of the force, the commander's 100 man bodyguard, was armed with what was described as a short French rifle and sword bayonet. ⁵ Scattered throughout the force were several hundred British Enfield rifles of a fairly up to date design. Each soldier carried fifty rounds of ammunition in a pouch.

The artillery also was composed of a mixture of weapons, mostly of American and British manufacture. According to Gordon it was rather an extensive collection.

The artillery consisted to two 8-in. howitzers, four 32-pdr. 25 cwt. guns, three 24-pdr. howitzers, twelve 12-pdr. howitzers on naval field carriages, eighteen 12-pdr. mountain howitzers, fourteen mortars, of which four were 8-in., and the remainder 5½-in. and 4 2/5-in., and three rocket tubes. The guns were on siege carriages, and the whole of the ordnance and ammunition were contained in sixteen large boats. ⁶

The artillery was kept well supplied with ammunition, each piece having from 250-500 rounds. Gordon introduced the use of three inch thick elm mantlets to protect the artillery in the field from enemy fire.

The drill of the force followed closely that in use in the British army, except on a simpler scale. Even drill commands were given

⁴Walter Thurlow Lay, The Autobiography of the Chung-Wang (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1865), p. 55.

⁵Mossman, Gordon's Diary, p. 123.

⁶Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, p. 36.

in English. The emphasis in drill was on speed rather than precision. The prime concern was to bring the men together quickly and to be able to move them about as a body. The Chinese are said to have been steady and able in their drill, but suffered from excessive talking in the ranks. Buglers were used with some success.

Most of the Ever Victorious Army's engagements involved the capturing of stockades, towns or cities from the Taipings. The procedure followed varied little, except perhaps in scale. The first step was to isolate and surround the Taiping position, usually with the assistance of other Chinese forces. Then the artillery of the force would bombard the Taiping position to reduce the effectiveness of the defenders and breach a wall or gate. When a breach had been formed, the infantry of the Ever Victorious Army would rush it and attempt to enter the Taiping position. According to Wilson,

The practice of the artillery, both in breaching fortifications and in covering storming-parties, was considered by many persons unconnected with this army to be uncommonly good;⁷

The Ever Victorious Army rarely engaged the Taipings in the open or from a defensive position. For example, the only occasion the Ever Victorious Army formed a square against a cavalry attack, March 1864, they broke and 450 men and seven officers were killed or captured out of 2,000.⁸

Besides the infantry and artillery, there was a third arm of the force, the flottila. It was composed of a varying number of steamers, barges and rather useless Chinese gunboats. The number of steamers, really tugs or tow boats, varied from one to four. The Hyson, the "flagship" of the flottila, was in almost constant use. It was a small paddle steamer, about ninety feet in length, mounting a gun in the bow and stern. Its only armour was elm planking around the bulwarks and timber traverses around the boilers. It, as well as the other steamers, was officered by foreigners, usually Americans, and manned by Chinese. The use of the steamers had begun under Ward, but Gordon

⁷Wilson, The Ever-Victorious Army, p. 132.

⁸Gordon, Gordon's Campaign in China, p. 74.

found them extremely valuable and continued their use. They were used for reconnaissance, rapid transit and as mobile artillery.

At K'un-shan, where on May 31 and June 1, 1864, Gordon slaughtered over a thousand fleeing Taipings with the Hyson's guns, he described the Hyson as "Worth at least 10,000 men."⁹

In addition to the usefulness of the steamers in slaughtering Taipings, the flottila was extremely valuable in affording rapid and silent transportation for men and materials through a country interlaced with creeks, ditches and canals. This was the main use of the barges and Chinese gunboats. They also found use as pontoon bridges over moats and similar water obstructions.

In summation, the Ever Victorious Army was quite westernized in terms of organization, equipment, drill and tactics. It was radically different in these respects to other Chinese forces serving in Kiangsu.

⁹As cited in Mossman, Gordon's Diary, p. 182.

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